

WIRE



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EXCELLENCE

JAZZ AWARDS

A LIST SUPREME

JAZZ MONTH

THE NATION SWINGS

JAZZ TOPS

100 IMMORTAL ALBUMS

OOP BOP SH'BAM

British Jazz
AND New Music
Awards

1987

Waldorf Hotel
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November 1st



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ANTHONY WOOD

Founder

A MEMBER OF

THE NAMARA GROUP

WORLD HEADQUARTERS:

Units G & H

115 Cleveland Street

London W1P 5PN, England

Telephone 01-580 7522

*

RICHARD COOK

Editor

CYNTHIA ROSE

Deputy Editor

PHILIP WATSON

Advertising & Promotion

PAUL ELLIMAN

Design

CAROLINE ROUX,

LORRAINE BOWEN

Subscriptions & Administration

ROY PATTISON

Promotion Consultant

JAN DIAKOW

Accounts

CHRIS PARKER

Publisher

*

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CONTRIBUTORS

Mike Atherton Nick Coleman

Tim Colwell John Fordham

Jack Cooke Andy Hamilton

Mike Fush Tony Harrington

David Ilic Nick Kimberley

Biba Kopf Steve Lake

Steve Lewis Graham Lock

Kenny Mathieson Brian Morton

Stuart Nicholson Brian Priestley

Mark Sinker Ben Watson

Sue Steward Barry Witherden

Val Wilmer Mike Zwerin

U S A

Diane Patrick

John Lirweiler Howard Mandel

*

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"I can definitely say that *WIRE* won't stop. It
will continue to go forward." CHARLIE

PARKER, 1953

Steve

Arguelles

by

Robert

Torbet



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THIS ISSUE we greet National Jazz Month. Milestone or millstone? It is hard to see the concept, at least, as anything but a potentially very good idea. There is a vast amount of jazz and jazz-related activity going on in Britain every month, not just this one. The point is to package all this with a bonus stack of special events and prove to the world at large that jazz has something to offer *you*, Mr or Ms Casual Punter. Everything has to be sold, especially in a cultural margin, where the shoal cannot expect to be hand-fed. It needs a set of piranha teeth.

THE CHALLENGE will be to follow up the initiative in the months ahead. If you organise enough events, the media will follow; it's keeping them, and any new audience, interested after the big bang's died down. Can Britain's beleaguered jazz establishment, divided and weakened as it is, keep the flame with any real effectiveness?

WIRE JAZZ AWARD
designed by Michael
De Nardo 1987

COVER: KATHY BUSBY,
jazz sultor, does a taxi
war dance in THE MALL
on her way to THE
WALDORF HOTEL for
the event of the year.
Photograph by
MICHAEL WOOLLEY.
Suit, tie and shoes by
Robot. Shirt by Jones.

IT'S EASY to take a soapbox stand on this issue; this magazine has done it more than once. Perhaps we're all rather tired of demands to rally round the flag, when all most of us want to do is listen to the music. *Wire* isn't designed as a polemical outpost: it just so happens that the subjects we cover, and the stance we are sometimes obliged to take in their treatment, seem to call implicitly for the voice of the pamphleteer.

I AM NOT calling, again, for the righteous to stand up and be counted. What this magazine prefers to do is let a well-informed point of view make its own space. What National Jazz Month, and hopefully its aftermath, should do is much the same: call for freedom and resource, by showing it can be done. As Charles Mingus put it, let my children hear music. At a point where, in cultural terms, mere sensation is a substitute for real ideas, such action is as 'political' as any other.

WE WISH National Jazz Month, and ourselves, a continued success. R.D. COOK

EDITOR





THERE IS ONLY ONE DESERT BOOT



Clarks

THE ORIGINAL

Black, Brown, Blue Sand, Paul Smith Woodhouse Reindeer

Southern Swing

THE FIFTH Lewisham Jazz Festival will open with songbird Anata O'Day, who appears with saxophonist/flautist James Moody and his Quartet, Tuesday 27 October, featuring Cleo Laine and the John Dankworth Sextet plus the Kinsey-Dankworth Big Band. On October 28, John Williams is joined by the National Youth Jazz Orchestra; on October 29, Courtney Pine fronts his Quartet; on October 30, Cuban trumpeter Arturo Sandoval appears. October 31 is given over to nostalgia in the form of a reunion concert from the legendary Ted Heath Band, directed by Don Lusher. For further information, ring 690-0002. Additionally, the new Broadway Studio at Lewisham Theatre will host free lunchtime trad sessions and after-midnight show music from the Paul Davis Trio, Offbeat 17 and Lloyd Ryan Four. And, on October 31, there will be a practical rhythm workshop from Martin Drew (Oscar Peterson's drummer), John Critchison (Ronnie Scott's pianist), and bassist Jeff Clyne. For details, ring 690-2317.

Geordie Jazz II

MAIN EVENTS in the second Darlington Jazz Festival are as follows: October 3, Yank Rachell (to be confirmed); October 13, Steve Williamson and IDJ Dancers; October 21, James Moody; October 23, Derek Winters All-Stars; October 24, Jo Ann Kelly; October 27, Tommy Chase Quartet, Body and Soul. For further information, contact The Arts Centre, Vane Terrace, Darlington, County Durham, DL3 7AX; 0325-483271.

Fen Fest

NORWICH contributes to National Jazz Month via their sixth Jazz Festival, which runs from Friday 16 October through Saturday 24 October. Scheduled dates are: October 16, Loose Tubes at UEA/LCR; October 17, Chicago bluesman Phil Guy; October 18, Bill Brunskill's Jazzmen at the John Stokes pub; October 19, Barbara Thompson's Paraphernalia; October 20, James Moody Quartet; October 21, Jamboree Jazz Night (including the Julian Siegel Quintet); October 22, Eduardo Nubla and Antonio Forcione; October 23, Andy Sheppard Band, and October 24, Orchestra Jazara. Full details and tickets in advance from Norwich Arts Centre Box Office, Norwich 660352, Reeves Vard, St Benedicts St, Norwich NR2 4PG.

Bio-Audible

THE NATIONAL Sound Archive celebrates National Jazz Month with two events. "In Impressions Of Trane" (October 1), Brian Priestley discusses the vast recorded legacy of John Coltrane with Alan Skidmore and Evan Parker. And in "Long Tail Dexter" (October 15), Chris Clark talks to Stan Britt about the career of Dexter Gordon. The latter will include both rare and well-known recordings plus exclusive interview material. Both evenings start at 7.30 (doors open at 6.45 pm) and will be held at the National Sound Archive, 29 Exhibition Rd, London SW7 2AS. Admission is by ticket with advance booking (telephone 589-6603/4) suggested. Price £2.50, concessions £1.50.

Week-Long World

THE TOWN and Country Club joins forces with the Shaw Theatre this month, to mount *Crossing The Border: A Festival Of World Music* between October 2 and 10. Artists already confirmed include: on October 2 at the Shaw, Nagma Akhtar (a young British Asian star making her London debut) plus Kathryn Tickell. On October 3 at the Shaw, the Clive Gregson and Christine Collister Band and Bolivian singer Jenny Cardenas. On October 6 at the Town and Country Club, folk guitarist John Fahey. On October 7, Ali Farka Toure (a British debut by the musician from Mali). On October 8, Canadian singer-songwriter Bruce Cockburn. And on October 10, four acts from the Cooking Vinyl label: Zimbabwe's 14-piece Real Sounds; the Oyster Band; Rory McLeod and the jovially-named Edward II and the Red-Hot Polkas.

Making Jazz Matter

NOTTINGHAM salutes National Jazz Month with *Collaborations*, a multi-media major arts initiative. *Collaborations* includes the following events: on October 3, the launch of Terry Cryer's month-long exhibition of photographic work (entitled *Love You All Madly*) at Focal Point Gallery; and Moving Into Towns + Simon Prince/Ray Lee Duo at the Jazz Keller. On October 7, the Clark Tracey Quintet, at the Old Vic. On October 9, Keith Tippett + Dave Wilson/Ray Lee Duo at Clifton College, Trent Poly. On October 10, Hoase Music + Chris Green Trio at the Jazz Keller. On

October 11, a showing of *Round Midnight* at City Lights Cinema 1. On October 14, Paul Bley at the Old Vic Tavern. On October 17, Elton Dean in a workshop at Clarendon College, then Elton Dean Trio + Dave Wilson at the Jazz Keller. On October 18, jazz shorts at City Lights Cinema 1. On October 20, Chicago Blues at Rock City, Talbot St. On October 24, Rivers Of Communication + Camels At Play at the Jazz Keller. On October 25, a showing of *The Gig* at City Lights Cinema 1. On October 28, Don Weller/Bryan Spring at the Old Vic Tavern. And, on October 30, Pinski Zoo + Daniel Weaver at the Jazz Keller. For further information, contact 021-632-4921.

Swing King Redux

OCTOBER 8 sees the Royal Festival Hall hosting a special re-creation of Benny Goodman's 1938 Carnegie Hall concert. A National Jazz Month special, the big band homage will be broadcast by the BBC, and the lineup includes, on alto sax, Bill Skeet and Alan Barnes; on tenor sax, Tommy Whittle and Danny Moss, on trumpet, Tony Fisher, Colin Smith, and Ronnie Hughes; on trombone, Roy Crumblings and Peter Hodge; and in the rhythm section, Bobby Orr (drums), Len Skeat (bass), Brian Dee (piano) and Dave Cliff (guitar); plus Bob Wilber (clarinet) and Joanne Horton (vocals). Special guests include Charlie Byrd, Al Grey, Art Hodes, Shorty Rogers, Spike Robinson and Roy Williams. For further information contact Dan Quinton on 01-240-9011.

Southampton Special

THE SOUTHAMPTON Jazz Festival opens its third year on October 5 with Fapy Lafertin and Le Jazz at the Concorde Club. On October 6, the Paul Stiles Sextet gives a Tribute to Buddy De Franco in the Joiners Arms, and on October 7, Tony Coe appears in the Solent Suite. October 8 sees Barbara Thompson's Paraphernalia at the Mountbatten Theatre, October 9, Ray d'Inverno's Four by Four at the Sims Concert Hall; October 10, a showing of *Round Midnight* at Mountbatten Theatre, followed by playing from Andy Sheppard, Sphere colleague Peter Maxfield, Simon Gore, Dave Buxton, and Mancala Kamara. The closing day begins with a lunchtime jam at 12.30 pm, a jazz workshop at 3 pm (led by Will Menster and other members of Bullit), and a concert by Bullit at 8.30 pm, all in the Solent Suite of Southampton Guildhall. For ticket information, contact John Edney on 0703 464950; for general enquiries, Jeff Reeves on 0703 252752, and for travel or accommodation information, 0703 221106.

Top Bop

HARLOW JAZZ Services - set up to co-ordinate, publicise and further the development of jazz in Harlow and environs - announces as the first of several forthcoming activities a residency titled Bop City every Sunday night at Cheeks Nightclub, Station Approach, Old Harlow, Essex from 8-12 pm.

Scots Sounds

THE National Jazz Month is celebrated in Scotland by a series of Platform Gigs. The Bobby Watson Quartet (with John Hicks, Curtis Lundy and Idris Mohammed) will play: October 8, Henry Wood Hall, Glasgow; October 9, Queen's Hall, Edinburgh; October 10, Seaton Hotel, Aberdeen; and October 11, Rep Theatre, Dundee. Jimmy Witherspoon with the Gordon Cawkshank Quartet will play the Seaton Hotel, Aberdeen on October 15. Urs Leimgruber (saxes) and John Wolf Brennan (piano) plus Tony Gorman and Sandy Evans plays Queens Hall, Edinburgh on October 16 and Henry Wood Hall, Glasgow, on October 17. Don Cherry's Nu play the Arts Centre, Aberdeen on October 21; Bonar Hall, Dundee on October 22, Queens Hall, Edinburgh on October 23; and Henry Wood Hall, Glasgow on October 31. Peanuts Hucko All-Stars plays Queens Hall, Edinburgh, on October 30, and Henry Wood Hall, Glasgow on October 31. Platform will also be organising workshops with Nana Vasconcelos and Ed Blackwell during the Nu tour. Further information is available from Platform on 031-226-4179.

Geordie Jazz

AT PRESSTIME, the Gateshead Jazz Festival (24-31 October) was bringing forth an agreeable level of bookings and enthusiasm - with confirmed bookings for four guests. They are, on October 26, the Andy Sheppard Quintet, on October 24, the

Grand Union Orchestra, on October 27, Bob Kerr's Whoopie Band; on October 28, "Shades Of Kenton" and on October 30, "Shades Of The Duke" (with Humphrey Lyttelton and Helen Shapiro presenting). A large number of additional events will take place in local pubs and clubs, with a bonus from Gateshead's new Cotton Club in the High Street. (Tickets to any of the Festival concerts will guarantee admission to the club that same night). For further information, contact Alison Lister, 091-477-3478.

Back To School

SOUTH LONDON'S Musicworks announces its new autumn term, commencing October 19. In the evening there will be public workshops serving a range of aptitudes, in guitar, percussion, drums, brass, a capella, vocals, theory and home recording techniques. In the afternoon, there will be music classes for beginners (requiring a £7.50 membership fee but for no additional charge). Contact the school early to ensure a place, via 737-6103 or at 137 Stockwell Rd, SW9.

By The Book

"JAZZ IN THE 1980s" is the title of a six-week Newcastle Workers' Educational Association course examining the state of the art during this decade. It aims to provide background for National Jazz Month events in Britain's North East, and will be held on Monday at WEA Premises, 51 Grainger St, Newcastle Upon Tyne, open to people joining on October 5.

Dial Twisting

TYNESIDE-BASED Metro Radio announces a revision in the broadcast time of their 13 year-old Friday jazz programme (presented by Alan Twelfththree). It will now go out from 6.45 pm-8.00 pm, covering the Metro Radio area on 261 m, 97 FM and the Radio Tees area on 261 m, 95 FM.

Jazz At The Junction

LONDON'S BATTERSEA Arts Centre continues its bid to establish itself as a major jazz venue with several National Jazz Month events. On October 2, the Centre hosts the Phillip Bent Band and on October 16, for the second time, the Julian Arguelles and Simon Purcell Group. On October 30, Plan B appears. All performances begin at 9.00 pm and admission is £2.50 (concessions £2). For further information contact Andrew Canham on 223-6557.

Scouse Jazz Daze

AS PART of Jazz North West's contribution to National Jazz Month, the Bluecoat in Liverpool will host a 5-day jazz festival, between October 13-October 17 inclusive. Featured will be October 13, Julian Arguelles/Simon Purcell Group; October 14, Apatos; October 15, Steve Lacy/Steve Arguelles; October 16, "First House; October 17, the Paul Bley Group. For further details, contact Jazz North West on 051-708-8771.

Swiss Bliss

ZURICH'S 1987 International Jazz Festival will feature, from the US, the David Murray Big Band, Coltrane Memorial, Nimal Group, and Cadavre Exquis; from Italy, Fratelli Sax, Pino Minafra Quintet, Tino Tracanna Quartet; from Great Britain, the Lindsay Cooper Group; from Czechoslovakia, Batiscaf and Habargani; as well as Sonny Sharrock Band, Tri Bravo, Wayne Horvitz' President, and the John Scofield Group. Further information from Internationales Jazz Festival Zurich, Präsidiabteilung der Stadt Zurich, Stadhaus, Postfach CH-8002 Zurich, telephone 01-216-31-11.

Wising Up

ON THE WEEKEND OF October 23-25, Sheffield City Polytechnic will host a convention for all those interested in Jazz in Education. This National Jazz Month event aims to cover all aspects of jazz education, from improvisation in the classroom to "New Material for Jazz Bands". Taking part will be the Guildhall Jazz Orchestra, Leeds College Big Band, and Sheffield's new all-black band, Fante. Contributors and lecturers include Eddie Harvey (Associate Professor at the London College of Music), the Guildhall School of Music and Drama's Scott Struman, Bobby Lamb, Ian Carr, Digby Furweather and Stan Barker. For further details and application forms, contact: Jazz SERVICES, 5 Dryden St, London WC2E 9NW, 01-240-2430.

House Label

WITH LAST month's LP *No Problem* by Cuban trumpeter Arturo Sandoval, Ronnie Scott's club launched the new Jazz House label. *No Problem* (JHR/C001) was recorded live at the Frith St club in August 1986; the plan is to release other recordings from live sessions *in situ*, by Buddy Rich, George Coleman, and Scott himself. The label should be in stores this month.

School Dates

CAER LLAN Jazz announces new dates for this autumn's schools: October 2-4 (Friday evening-Sunday lunch) and March 11-13 (Friday evening-Sunday lunch). The '88 summer school dates are Saturday 30 July-Saturday 6 August, with resident tutors Ray Batson and Alan Jones for an all-in cost of £125. Enquiries to Ray Batson on 0582-597773 or 01-838-2344.

Activist Alert

LONDON JAZZ Action, formed in January 1987 to bring together clubs promoting contemporary jazz and improvised music, is looking for venues to swell its ranks. Any club or potential club which is interested is encouraged to write: Steve Done, LJA, 25 Berwick St, London W1V 3RF - or to telephone Jon Corbett on 833-1269. Growth so far also means that LJA are now looking for a couple of part-time assistants to deal with inter-office chores. If you would like to find out about wages, hours and what's involved contact Mr Done as above.

Chris And Caroline

CHRIS PARSONS, after several years of looking after *Wom's* administration, has finally left us for pastures new. We send our best wishes and affection to Chris, whose calm and tolerance during every conceivable storm was always remarkable. And we welcome in her place Ms Caroline Roux, our new administrative anchor.

Northern Highlights

OCTOBER 30-November 1 marks the first in a series of Finnish jazz festivals - the Tampere Jazz happening in Tampere, Finland. For information, contact: Jazzsociety Break, PO Box 71, SF-33101, Tampere, Finland, or telephone 358-31-146 905. Other festivals on the far northern horizon include: Finnish National Jazz days (November 6-8, Järvenpää, Finland; information from The Finnish Jazz Federation, PO Box 54, SF-00101, Helsinki, Finland, 358-0-646 879), and Jazz Under the Northern Lights on November 27-29, in Suurselkä (Lapland), Finland (information: Kaamosjazz, SF-99695 Tankavaara, telephone 358-695-46 158).

Dark Laughter

CLARICE TAYLOR, famous across America as Bill Cosby's mother on *The Cosby Show*, is using her celebrity to reclaim the life of black comedienne Moms Mabley. Mabley (real name Loretta Mary Aiken) died in 1975 aged 81, but was a star of the Afro-

American vaudeville stage for fifty years. White audiences discovered her via performances with Cab Calloway, Duke Ellington and Count Basie at the Cotton Club and Club Harlem in Atlantic City, but Clarice Taylor's interest in Mabley sprang from seeing her act at the famous Harlem Apollo. (Taylor was born and raised in Harlem, where she still lives today.) The result has been *Moms*, a "play with music" based on Taylor's concepts and starring her as Mabley, with a script by Harlem-born playwright/author Ben Caldwell. Taylor's researches revealed deep troubles throughout Mabley's life: two rapes (both resulting in illegitimate children given up for adoption), the death of both parents in violent accidents, and the loss of a later daughter to drug addiction. *Moms*, which deals with these influences on the humour of America's only black comedienne of the era, has been enjoying a sold-out run at New York's Astor Place Theatre.

Slick Moves

THE IDJ Dancers continue their association with Steve Williamson's Quintet via a music-dance collaboration entitled *Proving A Point*. *Proving A Point* has been choreographed by West End stylist David Toguri (who has worked with the RSC and supplied video dance form for Bowie and Tina Turner). It can be seen during October on the following schedule: 13, Darlington Arts Centre; 17, Bristol Albany Arts Centre; 31, Albany Empire, Lewisham, London.



WHY WAS ALBERT KING smiling during his recent visit to London? Because he knew this ocular proof of his jocular self, captured by Sunil Gupta, would remain behind as part of *Jazz In Frames*. This exhibition of jazz photography, sponsored by WIRE, will feature photography and illustrations commissioned for the magazine's editorial use over the past twelve months. Included will be work by Sunil Gupta, Nick White, Bruce Rae, Anton Corbijn, Peter Anderson, Liam Woon, Stephen Speller, Michael Woolley, Caroline Forbes, Val Wilmer, Monique Chabral, Fiona Hawthorne, Ian Wright, Derek Ridgers and Simon Josebury. *Jazz In Frames* may be seen through October, National Jazz Month, in the Royal Festival Hall's ground floor gallery space.

ROUND UP THE USUAL SUSPECTS

by *Biba Kopf*

EVERY GENERATION needs its cultural scapegoat, the just man of Jewish myth or an abject figure whose deepfelt urge to denounce the age's hypocrisies, its sham liberal sentiments and expedient humanist ideals overcomes his fear of wholesale vilification. In the impoverished world of popular music few are willing to chain themselves to the pillars and pull the temple down around them while loudly ridiculing its high priests. Who is willing to take on this jellyfish world now that Jim Thirlwell has transferred his Fortus operation to New York? That toothless beast John Lydon, still proclaiming his obese PIL to be the fishbone in the craw of British propriety? What a windbag! His clown prince claims to damnably honesty are exposed as so much silly careerism when set against the deeds of someone who truly didn't care to be loved.

Such a figure was the canrankorous grouch of British art and letters WYNDHAM LEWIS (1884-1957). Founder of the Vorticism movement, a local variant on Cubism and Futurism, he launched a WWI period magazine, *Blat*, as a broadside against the vanities of his contemporaries. Nobody escaped his withering glare. Joyce's stream of consciousness, the social conscience socialism on the sleeve of the Bloomsbury set, Lawrence's sex mysticism — all were dismissed as so much subjective exhibitionistic hogwash. To such flabbiness he opposed rock hard art, rigid outlines and thoroughly wrought unshakable concepts. His disgust for the age's easy pact with socialism drove him into an uneasy alliance with fascism, which he eventually renounced on the eve of WWII.



It says something for the present age's feebleness when, instead of throwing up its own scandalous heroes, it has to kidnap yesterday's villains to expose today's cant. Nevertheless, the British group A PRIMARY INDUSTRY are to be applauded for resurrecting Lewis's vile, indomitable spirit. Their EP tribute WYNDHAM LEWIS (Sweatbox 12") devotes one side to 1940 readings from the man himself, the best of which is "Song Of The Militant Romance" — a gloriously

scabrous manifesto lambasting English-language insularity at a time when the slightest Teutonic inflection was deemed a treasonable offence. And on the A-Side API's Jemma Mellerio's pure English rose voice mouths the dirt of "The Liquid Brown Detestable Earth Folkier Bomb-shit" to a backing track that happily matches today's grotesque uncertainties to Lewis's visions of collapsing social structures. API aren't always as good as this. But as land reclaimers squatting the wastes of Britain's decayed industrial culture, they are never less than resourceful processors of detritus into appealingly forlorn musical objects.

THE SOUND OF AFRICA

by *Mark Sinker*

IN PREVIOUS YEARS, WOMAD has packed its untried world-names in beside NEW ORDER, THE FALL, SIOUXSE SIOUX — this year, the big-draw name seems to be the BHUNDU BOYS. That's good, and not so good also. Taking the risk is good; so is seeing the Bhundus as draws in their own right. But maybe the growing World Music pressure group, combined with other things, have made it a little too easy to tie African pop in with our own Roots Folk — to the exclusion of connections to be made with the likes of AR KANE or THE



SUGARCUBES. I'm suspicious of purity — it has two edges. "Ethnicity" is a badge of pride if it's adhered to from within. But it can be a trap if it's being insisted on by outsiders, whether market-conscious or ideologically self-righteous.

This comes up because the LP that's rightly attracting the notices, SALIF KEITA'S *Son* (Sterns 1020), is a magnificent fractured wash of silk-matt synthesiser, African choirs, and Keita's gorgeous desolate voice: as if he's plunged himself into the heart of radio-play production sound, and fashioned it into something all his and only his. I'll say here: the only other individual master who can stamp his own on such a pervasive catch-all setting is MILLS.

A Bass Clef date (don't know how it fits in with above discussion: relationship between Zulu culture and SA Jazz,

examine with examples?) Zulu guitarist and mbira-player DUZE MAHLOBO will be performing September 26, with and without SA sax-master BHEKI MSELEKU, and others. And Arts World Wide start winter operations as ever, with DAVID RUDDER the Soca-king, who'll be here October 8-19. Plus ALI FARKA TOURE and THE REAL SOUNDS will be at the Town & Country Club on October 7 and October 10, as part of the Crossing The Border World Music Festival (see News).

All a bit too folksy for comfort? Hmmm. Let's just take it to be a strategic concentration for the moment — and hope Salif's voice entices out current scene-mongers into the cosmopolitan pleasures of studio pop when they've won their battles, and can relax. Earthworks subtitled their new *Heartbeat Sonnas* compilation *Tropical Hi-Tech*, and the core of African Dance spirit lives on in the disco aesthetic (just ask CECIL TAYLOR!). *Sankou* and *Zook* and the juke in Jukebox: after all, the name's the same.

DESTINATION OUT

by Paul Bradshaw

A N Autumn buzz is beginning to filter through and the feedback from the regions is intensifying. Out there in Birmingham thrives the JAZZ TINGE. According to host BARATUNDE they're been operating for some time now, playing "an uncompromised mix of straight, Latin and Afro-Cuban Jazz". And, slowly but surely, they've created an enthusiastic following. Check it out — every Saturday at the PEN and WIG in Dale End.

Rumour has it that there's a session entitled Fat City at Birdland in Bristol with DJs TIM WILLIAMS and PAUL DUNMIDGE. Correct? More info please! While up in Cleveland that "gadgy" who sports a brown leather fez, MR JAZZ, is actively promoting the smooth scene. He informs us that one of the three clubs on site at the Berwick Weekender (23-25th

More info from Upnorth Promotions (091 389 0317).

Back to the London low life, upon meeting the CUTTING EDGE DJ's in between sets at Charlie Haden's Liberation Music Orchestra gig at the Astoria, they informed WIRE of an extension in their operations: beyond the regular Saturday-night spot at Clowns in Frith St., they plan to take on a



Thursday night at WHISPERS (10 till 3 am). This intresting firm firmly believe the future of the club scene will depend more on live music, new talent and strong lineups than on the selections of DJ's. More on these claps in the near future.

An excited and nervous GILLES PETERSON was tracked down at the Edinburgh Festival just prior to his session at Club Sandino. And, as usual, his diary is overflowing. On top of his regular sessions at the Wag on Mondays and The Baptist Bear at the Belvedere, Richmond (Sundays) you can add the Co.L COUNTRY CLUB Ruislip (Oct 2), The SLAMMER in Northfleet, Kent (Oct 9), and two Soul and Jazz weekenders: SPECIAL BRANCH at Rockley Sands, Poole, Dorset — Oct 16/17/18 (info: 0439 2628) and PRESTATYN WEEKENDER — Nov 31-1. Apart from waxing enthusiastic about A Man Called Adam, Peterson insists we should check out JAMES MOODY at the Wag (Oct 12).

Baz Fe Jazz is quietly building his spot at Legends and promises live sets from TOMMY CHASE and A MAN CALLED ADAM (Oct 7). To coincide with the Soho Jazz Festival there's a Soho Jazz Rave at the Astoria which features Jimmy Witherspoon, The Ted Heath Orchestra and Andy Sheppard; and on October 6th Baz and the big beat of the Tommy Chase Quartet will be found at the CAFE LOIRE, Gt Marlborough St, from 9 till 3 am.

Finally the Dance Con Jazz session at Gazebos still needs a few more bodies to keep the management happy. But undeterred their SOHO COMES TO BRIGHTON jazz weekend is going ahead on the 24/25th September. At the Royal Escape Club on Friday night is Tommy Chase and co., hottest steppers in the UK — IDJ, and guest DJ Baz Fe Jazz. The Saturday lunchtime set is in the intimate setting of the Jazz Room at the Churchill Hotel with RUSS DEWBERRY and Baz on the wheels of steel.

If all goes well, another weekend is planned featuring the JAZZ DEFEKTORS. They'll be slipping into Brighton prior to shipping out for an extensive tour of Japan to promote their mini LP — which has advanced sales of 15,000.



Oct) will be named the JAZZ ROOM. Rumour has it that Gilles may take a winter holiday in Berwick circa late October. And with COLIN CURTIS, BOB JONES and Mr Jazz himself spinning a solid selection of bop, swing and Latin it looks promising.

MICHAEL ONDAATJE

Resurrection Shuffle: Putting Jazz On The Page

by CYNTHIA ROSE

W H A T I S jazz writing? Is it some simulation of the music in the cold, fixed world of type? Is it the articulation of a listener's emotional response? Or is it the delineation of histories: biography, hagiography; scam and struggles and ties?

Jazz vetracular embraces forms from the Lindy hop to the Beat poem, the story spun in an afternoon bar through the room tone on a dusty disc. But Sri Lankan-born author and poet Michael Ondaatje can claim to be one of its pioneers. His 1979 biography of cornet player Buddy Bolden, *Coming Through Slaughter* (Picador), realigned the novel vis-a-vis jazz.

A story rebuilt from evocative fragments — legends, addresses, archival notes — the power of Ondaatje's book resides in basic jazz principles: a give-and-take between author and reader, free improvisation and poetic style. They're particularly apt, of course, in dealing with Buddy Bolden. But for Ondaatje, whose first work was poetry, personal expression requires such tools.

"Since 1970, I've lived in Toronto," says this clear-eyed cultural crossbreed. "But I was born in Ceylon and educated in England until 1962. England was really my exposure to jazz; I frequented all those clubs in the day of Humphrey Lyttelton and Chris Barber."

"But I heard about Bolden much later on — I read some brief reference to him going mad in a parade." The image fascinated Ondaatje, who says he has always based his novels (*The Collected Tales of Billy the Kid*, *Running in the Family* and the excellent new *In The Skin of a Lion*) on "history which has yet to be finished."

This author also works slowly — gathering facts and facets of myth and letting them stew in his brain for years. "Most of my books have been about people — like Bolden or Billy the Kid — who interest me deeply. And that means you live with them for three or four years. You start trying to see things, hear things, the way they might; it's almost schizophrenic."

That kind of curiosity, he says, "is like a hug, a love relationship. And the specific energy of *searching* — to me it's the most interesting thing, the most pleasurable part of writing."

"I think experience, the experience of life gathered through associations and events and other people," he continues, "is far more real than the novel where everyone is introduced by page 25 and it's all about the same people all the way through." In Ondaatje's orbit, characters come and go as they do in life: sometimes leaving only the glimpse and the memory behind.

The author says he would not have been able to approach Buddy Bolden *except* through elements of poetry and music. But he also did extensive research.

"Oh yes. First, I read a couple of those 'Jazz Masters of New

Orleans' type books with their brief, mythical mentions of Bolden. Then I wrote to the Jazz Archive at Tulane and visited the sites."

Tulane University had "nothing on Bolden, but lots of tapes of 90 year old men talking about the way things used to be. But then I saw the list of questions they had been asked. And it was like, 'Do you know the story about Bolden throwing a baby out of the window?' They'd already set up this definite image of him. And of course everyone claimed to have heard him play — just like people claim to have seen Bob Dylan at the Hungry i or the Sex Pistols at the 100 Club."

His weathered face splits into a gleaming grin. "So right from the start the Father of Jazz exerted a powerful myth, right from the first legend was running wild. Yet, at the centre, I found there was absolutely nothing of *how* — nothing apart from the addresses, the places where he had lived. I felt this tremendous energy towards the book and I had maybe four sentences of fact. So, I decided to improvise. Really, that's how it happened."

"I don't have any certain plan when I start a book," he clarifies. "It's a little like doing a documentary — the lens is just wide open, the camera is looking around. For me it happens in two distinct stages, and the editing stage comes along much later."

Does he consider himself a jazz writer? "Certainly not; by 'jazz writer', most people mean the Beats. It's like the poet thing: when people speak of 'poetic prose', I get very irritated. Because it tends to be a bit precious and, usually, they mean purple passages. I think the novel can learn from the poem and from music in terms of *structure* more than anything else."

But jazz itself is a vital influence. "Be-bop, which gave us 'Beat writing', I love; it's like sonnets. You know — a very strict frame within which incredible things are going on."

"What I do maybe share with jazz," he adds, "is that always I like to leave a certain amount unsaid. There has to be something *behind* any character who appears in my books. How we get from A to B, you know, without going over B, C, D, E: the reader thinks about that stuff too. It's much less patronising; the reader should be regarded as an equal. As soon as you start talking down to him, you're talking down to your characters, too."

"It minimises anything to pretend you know all about it."

Michael Ondaatje's new novel, *In The Skin of a Lion*, is published by Secker & Warburg, £10.95.



RALPH SUTTON

A Giant Strides

by ANDY HAMILTON

"RALPH IS without doubt the greatest, and he's just about alone with it now, because he's one of the few left from our finest and most creative piano eras." So says Milt Hinton, quoted by Digby Fairweather in his recent *Essential* tome. Ralph Sutton,

guardian of the piano tradition of Fats Waller, Willie "The Lion" Smith and Art Tatum, is playing in the most demanding of his many performing contexts—solo, and unamplified, piano in a packed room in the quaintly-named "Royal Overseas League", Edinburgh Jazz Festival HQ. He offers a compendium of the Harlem stride school: Willie "The Lion"'s sweet and lovely "Echoes Of Spring" (taken at a brisk tempo), Waller's "Viper's Drag", Belderbecke's "In The Dark". Things hot up a little for "Tea For Two" (though Tarumescque modulation, let alone Monkish bitonality, is avoided) and "A Handful Of Keys". But this is essentially a gentle, unflamboyant art—originally with elements of pastiche (the quotes from Grieg in "Viper's Drag", the amalgam of stride and boogie-woogie in "Alligator Crawl") but transcending that now.

The king of the ivory ticklers is a big, gentle, courteous man. Later, between sets with a Buddy Tate pick-up band, he talks about his career, and resists classification as a stride pianist. "I like to play it, it's happy, it swings. But I play other things also, according to what situation I'm in." Wasn't he playing more in a swing-style with Buddy Tate, and in an older style solo? "An older style . . . you mean like Beethoven?" Ralph clearly doesn't like the "classic/modern" dichotomy either (though unfortunately it still shows up in the divide between the two jazz festivals, McEwens and Platform), and has the jazzman's aversion to labels. "There's only two kinds of music, good and bad." (He quotes his favourite Eddie Condon: "You can always tell ass from class.") What does he think of the younger, "modern" pianists? "They can't get any more modern than Art Tatum". Point taken.

Ralph had a classical training, including two years at college, and it shows in the lightness of his touch and a careful use of dynamic shading. He started out in his father's band playing "country dances and picnics" in his home state of Missouri (He has returned to the country and lives in Colorado "in the mountains" now.) Early influences were Fats Waller and Art Tatum, and Jack Teagarden was an early father-figure. A job with the trombonist's big band took him away from college at 19 in



1942, and later he left a job on the staff of a St Louis radio station to open with Teagarden at the Famous Door on 52nd Street. Jack put him on to the four published Bix Belderbecke piano pieces and he "fell in love with music" right away.

He played as intermission pianist at Eddie Condon's club from 1948-56 ("It was a ball.") But the days of the long engagement are past, and though he finds his current jet-setting routine exhausting, he prefers it. Recently he toured Australia with trumpeter Ruby Braff, where all the pianos were "wonderful" in contrast to the "dog-assed pianos" he still sometimes encounters in Britain. He is due to return to Europe in the autumn.

This was to have been with his much-missed friend and fellow pianist Dick Wellstood, who died earlier this year at 59. This larger-than-life Wellstood was a close friend for 40 years, and Ralph was with him shortly before he died—of a heart attack at a jazz party he was booked to play in Palo Alto, California. The classic jazz piano tradition is much-impooverished by this passing.

Al Casey, Fats Waller's guitarist, calls by and Ralph soon has to go. With the drummet caught in the Edinburgh Fireworks traffic, the set begins: a piano-bass-guitar trio version of Getzthwin's "S Wonderful". Mr Sutton is clearly enjoying himself. Give yourself a treat and catch him in London in the autumn.

CLUB DATES

WHERE IT'S AT THIS MONTH

BERMINGHAM Ladbroke

- Hotel, New St
(4th) Clifford Jarvis and the Prophets of Jazz featuring Steve Williamson
(18th) Clark Tracey Quintet
(28th) Andy Sheppard Quintet
Adrian Boulton Hall, Paradise Circus
(11th) Don Cherry's Nu Strathallen Hotel (lunchtimes)
(4th) Our Brand
(11th) Paul Sautel
(18th) Mark Lockett Trio
Cannonball, Adderley St
(2nd) Evan Parker
(9th) Simon Picard
(16th) Keith Tippett
(23rd) Dave O'Higgins
(30th) Julian Argüelles/Simon Purcell
BRACKNELL Cellar Bar, South Hill Park Arts Centre
(6th) Pete Allen's Cellar Bar Five
(13th) Don Rendell Quartet
(20th) Pete Allen's Cellar Bar Five
(27th) Cayenne
CARDIFF Chapter Arts Centre, Canton
(9th) Gaspar Lawal
COVENTRY Post House, Alleyway (A45)
(18th) Harlem
DERBY Brownes, Stratford St
(4th) Phil Robson
(11th) Don Weller
(25th) Bra Joe
The Owl, Willow Rd
(13th) Kintone
Derby Playhouse
(18th) Loose Tubes
Derby College of Higher Education
(20th) Feral Music
DURSELY Bethesda Chapel, Uley
(31st) Ken Stubbs, Django

Bates, Mick Hutton, Martin France

- EXETER Exeter & Devon Arts Centre, Gandy St
(3rd) Jazz Workshop
(7th) Jazz Starters Workshop
(10th) Clark Tracey Quintet
(17th) Keith Nichols plus Roy Pellet's Hot Four
(21st) Jazz Starters Workshop
St George's Hall
(3rd) Real Sounds of Africa
LEEDS Coconut Grove, Merriam St
(14th) Clark Tracey Quintet
(21st) Guest Stars
(28th) Coconut Grove All-Stars
Leeds Trades Club
(17th) Steve Lacy, Steve Argüelles
(31st) Tony Oxley, Gerd Dudek, Rob Van Der Broek, Ali Haurand
Termite Club, Adelphi Hotel
(2nd) Paul Rutherford, George Haslam, Paul Hession
LANCASTER Yorkshire House
(14th) Steve Lacy/Steve Argüelles
BERMINGHAM The Cannonball
(12th) Steve Lacy/Steve Argüelles
MANCHESTER Green Room
(18th) Steve Lacy/Steve Argüelles
LIVERPOOL The Cooler
(19th) Steve Lacy/Steve Argüelles
CARDIFF Four Bars Inn
(20th) Steve Lacy/Steve Argüelles
HULL Spring St Theatre
(22nd) Steve Lacy/Steve Argüelles
SHEWSDURY The Butter Market, Howard St

(1st) Quadrant V Mike Carr

- (13th) La Rue
(15th) Antonio & Eduardo
(29th) Alan Randall Quartet
GLASGOW Third Eye Centre
(8th) New Music Group of Scotland
ARRENSIDE Zeffirelli's, Compton Rd
(20th) Rainer Bruninghaus and Trilok Gurtu
NEWCASTLE People's Theatre
(17th) Don Cherry's Nu Corner House
(3rd) Yank Rachell, Dave Peabody
(6th) Clark Tracey Quintet
(11th) Jimmy Witherspoon with Nigel Stanger Quartet
(13th) Steve Lacy/Steve Argüelles Duo
(20th) Carol Kidd
Riverside
(28th) Tommy Chase Quartet
Leeds University
(10th) Don Cherry-Nu
SHEFFIELD Spectrum, 15 Midland St
(16th) Jazz Warriors featuring Courtney Pine
NOTTINGHAM Cellar Bar, Old Vic
(31st) Pinski Zoo
Old Vic, Fletchergate
(14th) Paul Bley Quartet
London
ALBANY EMPIRE
Deprford
(25th) Jazz Warriors
(29th) Gail Thompson's Gail Force
(30th) George Russell Band
(31st) IDJ Dancers + Steve Williamson Quintet
BASS GLEFF Hoxton Sq
(1st) Alan Barnes Quartet
(4th) Charlie Byrd Trio

(5-7th) Bobby Watson with John Hicks, Curtis Lundy, Idris Muhammad

- (8th) Weller/Spring Quartet
(22nd) Simon Purcell's "Jazz Train II"
(28-29th) Eddie Daniels with Peter Ind Trio
Sunday lunches:
(4th) Trinity College Big Band
(18th) Guildhall Big Band
(25th) Royal Academy Big Band
KING'S HEAD Fulham High St SW6
(7th) El Quatro
MONKEYS CLUB
(25th) Tim Garland Quintet
PIED BULL Liverpool Rd N1
(1st) Human Chain
(5th) Native Spirit
(8th) Dave Berry Trio
(10th) Noel McCalls Contact
(12th) Jazira + African Dancers
(15th) John Etheridge Trio
(19th) Sumo Somo
(22nd) Acoustic Alchemy
(26th) Julian Bahula's Electric Dream
(29th) Roadside Picnic
QUEEN ELIZABETH HALL
(7th) Don Cherry's Nu
RONNIE SCOTT'S Frith St
(1st-3rd) Afro Cuba
(5-10th) Ray Brown Trio + The Breakfast Band
(12-13th) Irakere
THE LIMPS CLUB Lime Grove, Lewisham
(4th) Lovely Pies
THE TOWN AND COUNTRY CLUB NW5
(12th) Rent Party
(19th) Chevalier Brothers



Will Gaines, clubland booger

TIM KENT



H O R N W E B

f e e l

LIKE A SAX MACHINE

A foursquare set of hormones
from Sheffield

THE HORNWEB Saxophone Quartet consists of four people who play saxophones, but let your preconceptions test there. It is not a classical ensemble dedicated to the accurate rendering of a single composer's score, nor is it a jazz group, four lead voices dumping their rhythm sections for a blowing party. Brought together by the Sheffield free scene, the Hornwebs are one of an increasing number of outfits that have emerged from improvisation determined to press what they have learned into compact, accessible – through still uncompromised – shapes.

Nigel Manning: "My first gig at the school hop, I was the singer, singing "Brown Sugar" and playing Bobby Keys' sax solo – fortunately there's no singing over the sax solo. I used to take my tenor to my clarinet teacher – he thought it

WORDS: BEN WATSON PHOTOS: SIMON DURRANT

was wonderful as he couldn't stand four hours of people playing awful clarinet". After the classical training came immersion in Sheffield's celebrated Industrial Music – in Nigel's case, the Surface Mutants: "Pretty grim, lots of backing tapes of people being sawn up. I played my flute using a lot of effect pedals – octavers, chorus pedals, heavy echos units... I've never lost my heavy metal roots. I still listen to Black Sabbath albums – and you can print that".

Vic Middleton was born in Sheffield and comes from a "rock and soul" background, playing in (and arranging for) horn-sections in local funk outfits Payback and Santa Fe. His instrument is the baritone, though he also plays flute.

Derek Saw was born in a place near York, "but no-one's ever heard of it so I won't tell you the name", started playing the drums in various R'n'B bands, took up tenor sax at 19. He came to Sheffield in 1977 and has been involved in free music there ever since. He is the group's bluesologist and all-round anti-rock pugilist.

Martin Archer, on the other hand, though also born in Sheffield, started out in 1972 playing alto in various "Velvets-types rock groups", listening to the Soft Machine and Henry Cow and "played in a variety of inept jazz-rock groups until I discovered guys like Braxton and Evan Parker and got into free improvisation. Played nothing but free for quite a few years". What was the attraction? "You can get closer to improvised music than virtually any other music – you can get more involved with what's going on".

What to do with this legacy?

WITH THE advent of the jazz revival and its investment of basic (hard) bop forms with racial, political and fashionable weight, it's difficult to recall the trials and achievements of prior English jazz – as Martin comments, "When people say, 'Oh jazz, that's old man's music', if all you'd ever heard was English jazz you could understand that – it's so correct". However, Courtney and co were not the first musicians to protest that state of affairs.

In the early 80s, in the wake of the optimism of punk, there was a wave of groups touched by a desire to make more of jazz than a bow to the great tradition, a slavish repetition of American standards, going to see the local musos turn through "Green Dolphin Street" once again. It related to free music, but also made criticisms about the dangers of solipsism and structurelessness. According to Martin, it was bassist Paul Shaft who "made me think of harnessing some of the free playing aspects into a permanent group, using composition".

The result was Bass Tone Trap, a group which Martin took over from Paul, and involved both Derek and Nigel (along with a caste of musicians, many of whom turn up on the second Hornweb record, *Sixteen*). They never achieved the national exposure granted similar outfits like Rip Rig & Panic and Pigbag, but judging from the record they made, *Trapping*, the group was a cracker. The music is free-ranging and

full-blooded, a run-through of Ornette, James Brown and Beethart that shows a real response to black music's procedures, rather than to its acknowledged surface traits – a kind of music that only now, through the efforts of the Tacuma/Shannon Jackson/Laswell team, is emerging in the States. The kind of collisions and extensions pioneered by Jean Karakos' extraordinary Parisian label BYG, which in 1968–9 put out much of the music of the black American New Thing by musicians stranded in Paris after playing the International Pan-African Festival.

Martin on BYG: "Those records are catalysts – they turn up in people's collections. A lot of them aren't great records, but as a body of music it's very important – it laid down a new set of possibilities". Fired by the freedoms of that era, the aesthetic voice of the excitements of May '68, Martin cannot understand the resurgence of bop: "It's another reason why people playing Sixties music in 1987 is a false thing – it's no longer truly rooted in when it's supposed to be." These words light the blue touchpaper: Martin and Derek (modernist, fundamentalist) disagree with Vic and Nigel (soulboy, greaser).

Vic: "When you start playing an instrument you start by copying what you've heard. We're on dangerous ground when you start saying you've got to be avantgarde – you're so primitive in what you can do." Whereas Vic gives credit to Wynton Marsalis for being "a virtuoso in the traditional sense", Martin counters: "It's been done time and time again and now it's irrelevant".

Nigel is more inclined to situate the jazz revival in a social (rather than purely aesthetic) context: "I think it's very aggressive music – I think they've got a lot of aggression they want to play out, people like Steve Williamson and Courtney Pine. They're young. If I'd been that good at the age of 20 I'd have been out there trying to blast away. It's good – it gets people involved, gets people paid. I like music. I don't think Pine's capitulated, if anything it makes him want to rebel: on TV, with the Jazz Messengers, Courtney Pine's solo was quite against the grain – he wasn't just going to bop along, he was going to do something else. Derek and Martin talk about how it's from the sixties, but those guys in the record shop looking at the album covers don't give a shit about that – it's music, they don't care to pigeonhole. It's not our sphere, but I like it."

With such absolute disagreement about the current state of jazz, it's surprising that these four can make music together – but maybe jazz is not really the issue. Martin: "I think the interesting thing is that none of us come from a jazz background. I don't think any one of us would really consider ourselves to be jazz musicians". For many of them, it's simply a relief to associate with other members of the craft. Most of them have horror stories of the lack of comprehension of the sax in rock bands.

Nigel: "The sax is a *voce*. You often have trouble impressing

on people that you need to hear your pitch, you can't just play straight through like keyboards or guitar – you get this isolation effect". Vic demurs, pointing out that some bands *do* understand. "Chuck Brown, the whole Northern Soul thing – the horns are really in there, they're an integral part of the music – not like Spandau Ballet. There's the use of baritone sax in Tamla Motown . . .".

"WHEN YOU'VE got four horns written in harmony you don't actually hear your own horn – you just hear the chord." They all sound as if they are still feeling from the experience of playing together – this enthusiasm is touching after their previous disagreements. Although individual members initiate numbers, development of the music is very democratic. Nigel: "There's never been a situation where someone's turned up with a number and everyone's turned up their noses at it – we just like to pitch in. If it doesn't work, it'll work when it's been modified, mullied over". Martin: "It's a slow process. One tune called 'The Sticks' took a year."

They comment that the experience of recording *Kinesis*, their first record, was salutary. Martin: "We edited the numbers down and we liked them so much we've been playing them like that ever since. Everyone's got their own role. Vic's probably got the best knowledge of harmony, if we're having problems harmonizing we'll ask him."

"The first thing I write is a diagram, a kind of blobby shape – maybe the day before we rehearse I'll stick some notes to it. I think it's very easy to evoke a specific emotional response through use of melody – almost too easy. I try and write now with blocks of events in a sequence that might not be developed in anyway – lock things together in terms of sound."

What all four are agreed on is the importance of the blues. Derek: "It's the fundamental of all rock and roll and rock music. You can't discount it as an influence because everyone hears it in their adolescent years. All these jazzers who say they've never listened to rock – it's bullshit. You can't get away from it."

Nigel: "The blues is just about the only thing we have in common – love of the blues. Maybe we could be a saxophone quartet – who wants to be a guitarist? We have endless arguments about what we listen to until someone puts on a blues record. Anything else – a sax quartet, Stockhausen, Zappa, Cage – a huge argument. I think you need to get back

to the blues".

How does this relate to Martin's interest in Leo Smith and Braxton, the "cutting edge" of modern composition?

Derek: "The problem is that when white people took over the blues they played it as a musical structure – 12 bars, 16 bars, three chord changes – but that's not blues, the blues is a *feeling*. If you listen to a guy who just hollers in a field, it's a blues song, but the actual structure is totally free – it becomes like a Leo Smith trumpet solo."

The Hornwebs are aware of the advantages of playing as a group – Derek, for example, singles out the Henry Threadgill Sextet, and explains its cohesion and daring by the fact that it is a permanent thing. It is not a matter of smoothing out the edges – the general consensus is that the music has become more shambolic, the more it's achieved. Martin: "It's a constructed thing – I'd like to think we're shambolic in the



FOUR MEN AND A SAXOPHONE

way Muddy Waters or Howlin' Wolf might be."

In a sense, it gives a false picture to overstress the quartet's disagreements: obviously, as working musicians they are keen to compose and rehearse and play than to sit around intellectualizing the state of the art. However, there's no doubt that the variety of experience and attitude that goes into the band can help explain the uncanny combination of searing abstraction and roots that comes out when they play.

Hornweb have so far released *Kinesis* and *Sexton*. Both available from Hornweb, 73 Wadsworth Road, Sheffield – £6 each including postage. They play at London's Purcell Room on 16 October.



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I could find this Johnny Favorite*

BO
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ANTILLES
NEW DIRECTIONS





Main photo: Dewey Redman

Left to right: Sharon Freeman, Charlie Haden, Bob Stewart

Liberation Music Orchestra in London in August. By Andrew Potbury

Mike Mantler

LONDON
ASTORIA

IT WAS AN interesting exercise to see Mantler's band four days after Charlie Haden's Liberation Music Orchestra at the same venue and four months after Carla Bley's band at the Camden Festival. I first heard Mantler on the original Liberation Music album from 1970 where he played alongside Carla Bley, with whom he has frequently collaborated on other occasions. All three musicians were members of the

Jazz Composers' Orchestra, as was Steve Swallow who is currently touring with Mantler but is also a member of Carla's band. Str in Jack Bruce, who has worked with Bley and the JCOA, and you have the ingredients for one of those mind-boggling generalities by Pete Frame.

So much for the name-checks. Not surprisingly, perhaps, the music tonight had a lot of rock-derived elements. Over the last couple of years Mantler's 1982 opus *Sometimes There* (featuring Bley & Swallow) has spent a lot of time on my deck. It's an intriguing mix of jazz, rock and some

aspects of systems music, ranging Mike Gibb's mysterious string arrangements against visceral hysteronics from Mike Stern and Mantler's cutting trumpet. This performance occupied very much the same territory, and included the title track, with Beckett's text which inspired the album re-stated.

The beginning of the concert I found vaguely unsatisfying. Music like this needs a finely-tuned sense of drama and timing. The pieces need to be just the right length; too long and the repetitious pall,

too short and they sound like an introduction to a tune that's never played. Perhaps because he was not sure of what the sparse audience wanted or expected, Mantler began with several numbers which ended just when the relentless power of Swallow and Anton Fier's heavy, rock-solid rhythmic underpinning started to achieve their full effect. Only when Bruce joined the band about a third of the way through did Mantler let us exercise our attention spans.

Bruce's voice is still very distinctive, powerful and intense yet with a light, clear

tone, and what we ended up with was a Jack Bruce concert of Manríer compositions, accompanied by an all-star backing band. Good as Bruce was I regretted not hearing more of the band in its own right. It built up some dense textures and often achieved an exciting momentum. Had they been allocated the whole of the gig rather than just the second half the band could have really caught fire.

BARRY
WILKINSON

Oregon

GLASGOW
CITIZENS THEATRE

THE DEATH of Collin Walcott in 1984 threatened to bring an end to Oregon's 14-year existence, such was their close-knit sense of being an indivisible group. Oregon had never done things in the usual jazz way, inhabiting a sound-space of their own in contemporary music, placing the emphasis on texture, tonal shadings, and unusual instrumental voices within their free floating configurations, blending open improvisation into a flexible rhythmic ground.

For this listener, the later

albums had fallen away from the heights reached in their earlier work, and the characteristic Oregon sound seemed to be losing its necessary vitality, slipping off into a pleasant, only occasionally inspired reworking of ground already covered. It is pointless to attempt to speculate on their likely musical direction had Walcott lived. What was certain is that, deprived of his crucial contribution to the group's music, his death would precipitate some kind of upheaval beyond the first imposed change on a conspicuously stable unit.

On the evidence of this Glasgow Jazz Festival appearance, that is precisely what happened. New percussionist Trilok Gurtu is clearly set on being his own man, rather than pursuing any vain attempt to replicate Walcott's distinctive contribution. The star has disappeared completely, while in percussive terms, Gurtu is a much more rhythmically urgent performer. He replaces the delicate tone colourings previously favoured with a distinctly drummery appetite for a powerful rhythmic underpinning to the group's collective explorations.

That greater sense of urgency was evident in all the compositions played from the

forthcoming album, in contrast with the earlier material they used. Ralph Towner turned increasingly to synthesiser, playing some marvelously incisive duets with Paul McCandless on soprano, laid over a forceful, flexible rhythmic weave from Gurtu and Glen Moore's upright electric bass. McCandless was in particularly good form; I suspect if he occasionally blew some alto or tenor, rather than the oboe, cor anglais, bass clarinet, and other assorted woodwinds he favours, his reputation as a jazz horn-man would be greatly enhanced. He's not worried about that, of course, and Oregon are the beneficiaries.

KENNY
MATHIESON

*

Fred Frith

LEEDS
TERMITES CLUB

THE PRESENTATION - Fred Frith in sports jacket and Paul Four haircut, has two electric guitars, a small amplifier, two foot pedals and a table littered with household objects - may be undersaturated and austere, but the music isn't. Frith favours a luxurious, referential style full of virtuosic meat and special

effects. He opens with a twenty-minute free improvisation that provoked gasps of "Cor - he must be taking the mick" from two disbelievers behind me. He is, though, no disciple of the Coshill/Bailey school of remorseless surprise. Instead, the music's driven by an exasperated, bluesy logic, a free-wheeling quilt stitched by stormy vectors - intense sections where the desire to push a musical idea to its limit often results in jarring crescendos and nerve-jangling shrieks.

Frith attacks the guitar with one implement after another: a serrated file, a tin lid, a paintbrush, a metal sheet, drumsticks. This array of weaponry - and the fact that each is used only once and then discarded - is disconcerting. It destroys the notion of the artist as palette-master, picking and mixing with deliberation and skill, and ushers in the vergerous possibility of a never-ending series of effects. If a paintbrush, why not a clothesbrush (which did in fact appear) - or a toothbrush, or a hairbrush? Perhaps panic-struck our scoffers left. In fact, we were witnessing a vivid example of improvisation's dialectic between material and technique: the file induced industrial brutality, tapping on the metal sheet revealed flamenco brava-

do.

Next, Frith struck metal spokes between fretboard and strings, interrupting his strangled atonal picking to strike these in turn with a drumstick, chiming out heavy gong sounds. This was like a miniature version of a Xenakis piece, because we're exploring the sonic effects of a material construction rather than appreciating expressive purpose. For "a little nice music before the break" Frith plays an evocative ECM-oriented ethnic jig. This tune allows him to demonstrate consummate technique, hammering-on with his left hand for the speedy runs, impressively controlling the texture via fingers and electronics.

A final blues-folk piece recalled Beetham's Magic Band with Winged Eel Fingerling, pressing many of the previous wild effects into apr fills and flourishes. Frith is fully conversant with the glamour of exotic timbre. Twisting the tuning-keys he'd send out harsh, metallic sitar-like twangs; his singing is the demented wailing of a *Goon Show* muzzan (or like John Lydon with PIL). Coupled with his liking for Hebridean Scottish melodies, the whole effect borders on kitsch, an avant-garde "Mull Of Kintyre." However, he's saved from that by the psychotic, scrabbling

violence of his playing. Even if he lost a couple of panthers in stressing the joys of freedom, Frith's romanticism is better heard shimmering amidst wrecked technique than it would be spread on a plate and served up as the main course itself.

BEN WATSON

*

Jan Garbarek Quartet

EDINBURGH
QUEENS HALL

FORMER Edinburgh was the week of the carved sopranos. Both Bob Wilbur and Jim Galloway in the McEwan's Jazz Festival taking care of the mainstream, and in Platform's late-night concerts the pole Peer Gynt of the saxophone, Jan Garbarek.

Whether or not Garbarek deliberately sets out to stretch a tightrope between the ridiculous and the sublime, it is a decidedly mixed pleasure to watch him not falling off it. Actually the rope is made of chewing-gum, mint-flavoured and infinitely extendable, so the only danger is that it ends up stretched along the ground. Not letting on when this does

happen is admirable, but the best part is that he is too light on his feet for it to happen much anyway.

The same thing applies to his ECM label-mate, and Garbarek's quartet partner of the last few years, Eberhard Weber, whose romantic conception is sometimes so full of bare-faced banality it fairly takes the breath away. Which is, of course, a pleasant experience for the onlooker even if ultimately a little masochistic. Judging by their melodic hooks, this pair's ambitions would go no further than Old World New-Age, unless they were lucky enough to create a genuine pop song. 'Mission: To Be Where I Am' was one of two written lines that recalled details of Lennon's 'A Day In The Life', and you can't get much more sentimental than that.

Part of my reaction has to do with performers very obviously milking their assets, and milking their audience in the process. Technology is a great aid here, and I don't just mean Lars Jansson having his PK7 sound like a harpsichord or like Astor Piazzola's bandoneon or even like an acoustic piano left out in the rain. I mean also Weber holding bass notes so vibrant and luscious that you can feel them in your genitals, and Garbarek letting the echo

enhance the upper edge of his soprano sound beyond what mere blowing could achieve. But every time I think "oh, come off it", he does something extraordinary like transferring an Ayler wail to the very bottom of his tenor (difficult enough technically) and making it ring in a way that would be impossible without brilliant microphone technique.

A saving grace turned out to be Nana Vasconcelos, who never overplayed his hand and only used the electric for his brief vocal excursion. The ethnic percussion which can so easily become self-indulgent (as on his Antilles album) was always at the service of the group, and the one time he opted for straight sticks-on-snare-and-cymbal made kit drums seem totally obsolete by comparison. Then again, the positive effect of his contributions was facilitated by the rhythmic assurance of the other three, even if this was never demonstrative enough for my liking.

As always, the narrow palette implies the risk of subtlety refining itself out of existence. But that was true also of the Bill Evans Trio. Or of Grieg's version of Peer Gynt.

BRIAN PRIESTLEY

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DIZZY GILLESPIE

BE BOP, BLUES & CUBAN DUES

THIS SEEMS TO be a good year for anniversaries, and one of the most warmly welcomed must be Dizzy Gillespie's 70th birthday. Dizzy spearheaded a movement with a high mortality rate: his long life is one of jazz's more agreeable reversals of form.

He has grown from a young, mischievous wild man to an old, avuncular wild man. At the London stop-off on his recent birthday tour, Gillespie was clearly taking it easy, but the bright fire of his temperament still glinted through. The considered intricacies of his mature style survive into his old age, although his sound today is blurred beyond real definition: the trumpeter still thinks ambitiously, even if he doesn't attempt the stratospheric vaulting of yore. The blend of complexity and raw excitement which bebop forged was distilled more

by Richard Cook

completely by Dizzy Gillespie, perhaps, than anyone else.

The Gillespie discography is by now vast. His first recordings, with Teddy Hill, were done in 1937, and one assumes that the 50-years-on band in 1987 was recorded by somebody. Sorting through five decades of this material is a daunting pleasure: Gillespie's music is packed with incident, has grown deeper and more expansive with the years, but has often been troubled – by problems of context, group and other issues.

His two years with Cab Calloway, as a front-of-the-section trumpeter, provided a lot of records, with occasional trumpet solos amidst plenty of Calloway nonsense like "My Choo-Choo Bird (Could Sing)". But the pioneer pre-bop big bands of Earl Hines and Billy Eckstine, where Gillespie and others began hatching their revolution, were scarcely recorded. It's something of a leap from there to the early examples of the new music.

Gillespie's first small group bop sides are fascinating, inconsistent records. The indispensable *In The Beginning* double set on Prestige collects many of the key ones, including the February and May 1945 sessions with Charlie Parker. The camaraderie is already statesmanlike – in their solos on "Hot House", for instance, they employ almost identical patterns of tension and release, yet the resulting impressions are quite different. Bird is jagged and harsh, Dizzy imperious. The trumpeter's demeanour is significant for an understanding of his role in bop: he always sounds like a leader, a figure of group resource, as opposed to Parker's ferocious isolationism. Compare the ensuing sessions with Sonny Stitt, a lesser man. If Bird's powers provided a greater intellectual challenge to Gillespie, the cooler atmosphere of other dates seemed to let Dizzy relax into an even finer audacity. His flights on "Oop Bop Sh'Bam" or, in the February 1946 session with Milt Jackson, "Anthropology", have a fantastical edge. The phrases in the latter recall the overpowering celebration of Louis Armstrong in "Wild Man Blues" – or of Roy Eldridge, Gillespie's first great model.

"I FOUND OUT there were a lot of pretty notes in a chord, instead of running over them." That discovery, and his espousal of the flatted fifth, lent the young Gillespie's style a certain prettiness. He was never a very brassy player. But he was a fleeting, elusive sort of beauty. His solo on "Of Man Reborn" proposes an astringent, modern sensibility impressed on an older sort of form. The comparatively gentle pace of the tune is suddenly, pellucidly lit by his choice of very high notes, which decorate the music like tiny pinpoint flares. The solo is over in a moment, but those few high phrases dwell in the memory.

Dizzy's move back to big bands was a natural move for a man who loved to work in a big company – Gillespie has always found grand settings congenial for a grandstanding

style. By 1945–46 he was running his own big bands, but they were groups chartered to rationalise the earthshaking vigour of bop without diluting it. It was a logical enough notion: a bop combo couldn't match the punch of a big band, but it had the edge on speed and vitality. Why not combine the two? The classic records from this era, "Things To Come", "Emanon", "Two Bass Hit", are still electrifying bursts. There can be wild juxtapositions even in one tune: the scat frolics of "Oop-Pop-A-Da" come only after an introduction of palpable menace. Such swift changes of order mirror Dizzy's own solos, where withering volleys of notes might be followed by a disarming pause or a drastic swing into the highest register. His ability to impose rhythmic form on this imagination has remained the touchstone of his music.

In the same way that the Eckstine band attracted the new brilliance of the first boppers, Gillespie's big band was a magnet for progressive young writers – John Lewis, Gil Fuller, Tadd Dameron. George Russell's "Cubana Be Cubana Bop" is about as far out as this big band could go, even so, with its dark stew of Latin rhythms (Gillespie's new interest) bubbling under the leader's trumpet, the result is not too different from the slightly glitzy mood of an Artie Shaw concerto.

The classic set to hear from this period is the Pasadena concert of July 1948, with a band including James Moody, Cecil Payne, Ernie Henry and conga player Chano Pozo. The precision of the band is authentically Gillespian, but it swings as efficiently as any Ellington orchestra. The spotlight hardly strays from Gillespie himself. There is surely no better version of "Round Midnight" than this one, a muscular and still reflective treatment which has the freshness that tune originally possessed. A set piece like "Manteca" must have been overwhelming in person. Crowd-pleasing is a big band staple, but the intensity of Gillespie's 40s orchestras is probably still unequalled.

If big band work employed Dizzy's most expansive side, it scarcely diminished his powers as a small group player. The 'reunion' session with Parker and Monk for Verve in 1950 (*Bird On Verve Vol 2*) is stunning because Gillespie, if anything, outplays Bird. With Fats Navarro gone, Dizzy was again undisputed kingpin of bop trumpet. There is a pressurised determination about the trumpet playing on this date: the skewed attack on take three of "An Oscar For Treadwell", the sly first measure of "Mohawk" followed by its ensuing rips and runs.

If Gillespie couldn't lead a big band, and he had to break it up at that time, he'd still work matters his own way. The commencement of Dee Dee, his own record label, came next. But many of the Dee Dee sides are weakened by novelty vocals and poor tunes. Some of the most interesting sides from this time came instead with some records marching Gillespie with the string arrangements of Johnny

DIZZY GILLESPIE

Richards. Although the orchestral parts are often a very thick soup, the contrast between them and Gillespie's playing is the more dramatic. Unlike Parker's meetings with strings, where Bird often sounds merely frozen off in a corner, Gillespie creates the kind of austere, towering structures which Armstrong did in the 30s. "Alone Together" and "Lullaby Of The Leaves" are fine examples.

WHEN HE JOINED Norman Granz's Verve in 1954, Dizzy worked through some all-star meetings. *Diz And Getz* has some delightful moments, especially the trumpet reading of "It's The Talk Of The Town", though a companion session with Sonny Stitt is more diffuse. Dizzy's big band of 1956-57, formed for a State Department tour, was a rousing unit, but their records seem cool beside the whistling energy of his earlier orchestras. The studio-only bands that appear on *The Big Band Sound Of Dizzy Gillespie* are pick-up groups, but are no less involving than the 'regular' touring orchestra.

If Granz meant to supply Gillespie with interesting contexts to work in, the results weren't always fascinating. Live sets like *An Electrifying Evening* lack real purpose, and some studio records are also indifferent. *A Portrait Of Duke Ellington* bears some attractive trumpet solos, but Dizzy seems uninterested by the challenge of Clare Fischer's charts. Nevertheless, some sessions caught fire, particularly the quintet of *Have Trumpet, Will Excite!*/*The Ebullient Mr Gillespie*. Junior Mance, Les Spann, Sam Jones and Les Humphries create some of the urgency of a vintage bop combo in these 1959 sessions, together with the more temperate atmosphere of mainstream blowing: it reminds one that Gillespie could equally have taken the path of, say, Buck Clayton. The peaty detail of his playing in "My Heart Belongs To Daddy" or the lyric meanders of "There Is No Greater Love" suggest means of overlaying bop complexity with a sweeter way of handling nuance.

After the Verve contract ended, Dizzy tried various settings, pursuing the Latin tinge in a band with Lalo Schiffrin and then forming what proved to be a long-standing quintet with James Moody and Kenny Barron. Though remembered as a fine group, their few records — apart from the thoughtful *Something Old, Something New* — are unremarkable or compromised by pop material.

The 60s and early 70s were a serious trough for Gillespie's work (although he spent some time campaigning to be President, of course). With bebop trumpet out of fashion and a heyday apparently over, what more could he do? Surprisingly, it was Norman Granz who again got him back on course on record. His contract for Pablo opened in 1974 with a superb record, *Dizzy Gillespie's Big 4*. The others were Joe Pass, Ray Brown and Mickey Roker, and the session is almost neoclassical in its view on Gillespie's art. The harmonic virtuosity of Pass prickles the trumpeter

into his most adventutous frame of mind. The Latin lightness of the opening "Tanga" is the only froth in a session which is otherwise played at a very high level: "Hurry Home" is a beautifully pitched ballad, deeply blue and serious, where the pinched accents of the muted trumpet prove profoundly affecting — here are glimpses of what Miles took off Dizzy. "Be Bop" is taken at a breathless tempo, a great display of chops, and perhaps the most interesting treatment comes in "Jitterbug Waltz", which has the corny melody dispersed by a flexible rime and the absorbing dialogue between Gillespie and Pass.

Dizzy's duo album with Oscar Peterson is probably even better. Though the pianist is unmitigating at just about every point, this is still one of the great displays of clarity, incisiveness and wit which the trumpeter has committed to record. In the long "Blues For Bird" he begins with a secretive muted solo, goes into a frilly, bumble bee open improvisation and then, when Peterson halves the tempo, walks the line between parodic and real blues playing. The elements of fantasy which Dizzy harbours in some of his music get full, focused expression here: the exotic sweep of "Caravan" and "Mozambique", the speedball blur of "Dizzy Atmosphere". In this bald format, the elevated detail, authority and playfulness of Gillespie's music are delivered in the manner of a genial masterclass.

His records since have been a mixed bag of great moments and lesser matters. Sometimes one feels that records have been less kind to Dizzy Gillespie than they might have been: the great warmth of his tone hasn't always come through, and there is no one body of recordings — like Parker's Savoy or Coleman's Atlantics — to testify to his greatness. The length of his career, his penchant for having fun, his interest in the open-ended possibilities of Latin beats, his straddling of several schools: sometimes the multifarious nature of Dizzy's gifts has led us to forget his singularity. Our good fortune is that so much Dizzy Gillespie music is there to remind us.

RECOMMENDED DIZZY SPINS:

- IN THE BEGINNING (Prestige)
- DIZZY GILLESPIE (RCA)
- BIG BAND IN CONCERT (London)
- BIRD ON VERVE VOL 2 (Verve)
- JAZZ AT MASSEY HALL (Prestige)
- THE DIZZY GILLESPIE STORY VOL 1 (Rouls)
- THE BIG BAND SOUND OF DIZZY GILLESPIE (Verve)
- HAVE TRUMPET WILL EXCITE!/THE EBULLIENT MR GILLESPIE (Verve)
- SOMETHING OLD, SOMETHING NEW (Philips)
- DIZZY GILLESPIE'S BIG 4 (Pablo)
- DIZZY GILLESPIE MEETS OSCAR PETERSON (Pablo)



EARTHWORKS: Africa Stand Alone?

A report on the next bridgehead to bring African pop to British shores

Words: Mark Sinker

Illustration: Vonnie Roudette

FIVE YEARS AGO: Africa establishes an impregnable beachhead in Britain. King Sunny Ade's dazzling webs of sensurround Juju catch the public imagination, and Island back up the coup with two delicious compilations, *Sound D'Afrique 1 & 2*. Virgin, Britain's other major minor (and Island's mortal rival) send one RD Cook hurtling across the world to Tanzania, whence he telegraphs intoxicated despatches. And East African club bands Orchestra Makassy and Orchestra Super Mazembe follow Ade's African Bears into our fast-expanding consciousness.

Then – it doesn't happen. The doors slam, the bright noises recede, the flood diminishes to a splash. Virgin drop their African acts. Island carry on for a couple of increasingly disappointing years with their Yoruban monatch – until ties are severed by mutual agreement. Then African music is filed alongside the Sinclair C5 and Space Dust.

Jumbo Vanrenen is an English South African who's lived and worked in London since 1971. A genial, massive man, he's spent the last 16 years collecting and listening to the music of the black South African townships; music he first heard as a child back home. For the last five years, he's crusaded for this music – as for other African sounds – through his tiny label Earthworks, steering it through hard times, first with his ex-wife Mary and latterly on his own.

Jumbo was working at Virgin when they first took a look at

African music. With them since 1971 when he arrived in England, he ran their Frontline reggae subsidiary from '73 to '79.

Every weekend, either Jumbo was dropping in to Steens (then a London radio repair shop with a rack of African records at the back) or he was begging his pal Trevor Herman to supply him with Township Jive. That music has an intense association with nostalgia and homelessness, and often seems to carry a political weight just in its gritty beat and texture – a resilience that is the seed of an antidote to apartheid.

When Virgin were offered the two East African Orchestras, Jumbo fired them up to release Makassy. He was working on Mazembe when the company went through a shakeup – and he found himself fired instead. Jumbo spent his redundancy money on getting out "Love," a single by Orchestra Jazira, the capital's leading Afro club band. And, out of the wreck of the major labels' grand dreams, Earthworks was born. A tiny and fragile husband-and-wife team, it intended to operate at a slow-and-steady, low-key level: importing or licensing records from Paris and Africa.

FIVE YEARS ON, after many disappointments and a cruelly bumpy ride (Jumbo and Mary Vanrenen are now separated), Earthworks should be seen as a centre-pin in the triumphant return of African music. Others played more

prominent parts, perhaps (in particular success stories such as Youssou N'Dour's or the Bhundu Boys'), but the Vantennens laid down the back-breaking groundwork.

With Jumbo's invaluable advice, Sterns transformed themselves into, first, a record shop and, in 1983, a record label. Then in 1984, Morgan Khan's Streetsounds flirted briefly with Celluloid: twinning US and Afro-Parisian dancefloor imports. And in 1985, Jazira's Ben Mandelson persuaded R'n'B catalogue company Ace to initiate Globestyle.

Still, specialist markets can become ghetto markers, prey to conservatism and its consequent resentments, as well as increasingly narrow presentation. African music is a huge, constantly-changing fabric of sounds – one which has threatened again and again to burst beyond its necessarily-restrictive Western outlets. Its successes of 1986 and 1987 are exactly the sort which attract major record company interest. And Earthworks have indeed just released a new series of compilations – through Virgin. While still at the helm of the label he founded, Jumbo has also taken charge of Island's "tropical" subsidiary Mango. Majors like Virgin and Island are eyeing Africa once more; what's to stop the same mistake being made? In Jumbo's view, the fresh alliance of indies and majors is a move in the right direction. Small companies, he maintains, may have mobility and the freedom to experiment – but only large ones can put sufficient cash and energy behind the talents of individual artists.

And Jumbo knows whereof he speaks. From '84-'86, Earthworks were convinced that Thomas Mapfumo, founder of Zimbabwian *chikwanga* music and symbol of that country's Liberation War, could find an audience in Britain. But the cost of bringing him over (not to mention his ten-plus band) proved absolutely ruinous: the Vantennens ended up selling their house. And, when he went back for good, Mapfumo's name meant little more than it had the day he arrived.

But, by 1985, Earthworks' flexibility and intuition were under pressure for other reasons. Their very first releases, '84's *Viva Zimbabwe!* and *Zulu Jive*, had sold promisingly. And contacts had been established in Nigeria, Côte d'Ivoire, Kenya, Zimbabwe and South Africa. With Rough Trade, Jumbo planned a series of South African releases – by the Mahotella Queens and Ladysmith Black Mambazo, as well as the *Indestructible Beat Of Soweto* compilation.

Rough Trade had manufactured and distributed the independent's earlier waxings. But Rough Trade is set up as a collective, and was at this point becoming more politicised on the issue of the ANC's Economic and Cultural Boycott of South Africa. A collective decision had already been taken and re-affirmed not to sell RT releases in South Africa and, in late '85, the collective decided not to handle South African music at all.

Since Paul Simon's controversial success with *Graceland* (which featured a number of Township musicians), this subject has been widely debated. And for some, consensus has been reached that the dissemination and support of black South African culture (the "people's culture" of Oliver Tambo's May 28 speech this year) is to be encouraged.

But now disagreement exists over the exact balance to be struck – between honouring the economic boycott and paying

due regard to Township musicians when a percentage of all their royalties goes automatically to the apartheid government. And back in 1985 the subject was rarely broached at all.

Earthworks and Rough Trade could and did continue to work together on other projects such as Mapfumo and Youssou N'Dour. But Rough Trade's Peter Walmsley – who supported Jumbo during the dispute – now feels that, while the eventual decision was fair and to be respected, it was nevertheless disappointing. And Jumbo continues to maintain that his course is the better one.

The split did mean another outlet had to be found for the South African material. So Jumbo struck a deal with Making Waves, an independent distribution company. And in '86, *The Indestructible Beat Of Soweto* (which would prove Earthworks' all-time best-seller) came out. But the new distributor crashed almost immediately. But the end of the year, it had gone into liquidation – with clients given no warning before the abrupt collapse.

MANY INDUSTRY observers assumed that Earthworks could not possibly survive this final disaster. But all along, Jumbo had been attracting notice. Youssou N'Dour's *Nelson Mandela* didn't sell especially well. But he had been touring the globe with Peter Gabriel and by the beginning of '87 was a well-known name. *Indestructible Beat* got excellent press in both Britain and the United States, it topped critics' polls and got caught up in well-publicised debates about authenticity and roots purism. And *Graceland* had proven to everyone the South African sound could sell.

Thus, in early '87, when Jumbo approached Virgin to set up a deal, he had a substantial reputation on his side.

At the present moment, the future looks promising for both Earthworks and those Third World musics Jumbo loves. Via Virgin, he's architected five new releases – including one, *Harrican Zoob*, which gives him a Caribbean gent to champion. Plus, by anyone's reckoning, it's a felicitous moment. Guadeloupean band Kassav' have conquered West and Central America for *zoob*. Ivorian Alpha Blondy – possibly the greatest pan-national reggae star since Marley – has begun to make his mark in the English-speaking world. And latin musics are enjoying a new Anglophone prominence.

Meanwhile, Jumbo Vantennens remains a man without enemies or bitterness – a truly remarkable thing in a record company boss. He's never made money from his lifetime obsession... but then it seems he never sought to. His commitment has been to wide listening and a sensitive approach. "To a certain degree, with the problems of racism in this country," says Jumbo today, "a greater understanding of black music might help people. But that's probably not the main reason I do this. The main reason is that I love the music."

PAN-GLOBAL PLATTERS: *The Virgin Quartet*
Thunder Before Dawn (EWW1)
Harrican Zoob (EWW2)
Heartbeat Saakou (EWW3)
Mablathini: Lion Of Soweto (EWW4)
Dudu Pakuwana & Spear: In The Townships (EWW5)

THE IMMACULATE ONE HUNDRED

In response to many, many requests over the last few years, we have finally relented our views that there is no Top 100 Jazz Album list – and have gone ahead and produced one. We asked 35 critics and contributors to *WIRE* to select their favourite jazz albums since, as a starting point, the bebop era of Charlie Parker.

The one hundred albums you find listed on these pages are the ones that received most votes. We've refrained from putting them all in a point-by-point order – instead they are roughly chronological, listed by decades. But the Top Ten albums are separately listed, the clear winner being – perhaps surprisingly – Eric Dolphy's *OUT TO LUNCH*.

What the poll seems to suggest is that most acknowledged classics still hold away as the records people remember and judge other records by. The fewer later entries may only be an indication that it takes some records time to mature – there may be many more from the 70s and 80s by the time we do it all again, perhaps a decade from now.

In the meantime, here is our chart of the greatest. The personal choices of a comparatively small number of people, so hardly totally definitive – but we humbly suggest that anyone waiting to build a good jazz library would find these five score records a pretty useful cornerstone to an essential collection.

THE 40s

- THE SAVOY SESSIONS CHARLIE PARKER (*Savoy/RCA*)
- CHARLIE PARKER ON DIAL CHARLIE PARKER (*Spotlite*)
- THE FABULOUS FATS NAVARRO FATS NAVARRO (*Blue Note*)
- GENIUS OF MODERN MUSIC THELONIOUS MONK (*Blue Note*)
- BIRTH OF THE COOL MILES DAVIS (*Capital*)

THE 50s

- A NIGHT AT BIRDLAND ART BLAKEY & THE JAZZ MESSENGERS (*Blue Note*)
- THE GERRY MULLIGAN QUARTET GERRY MULLIGAN (*Vogue*)
- COOL AND CRAZY SHORTY ROGERS & HIS GIANTS (*HMV*)
- JAZZ AT MASSEY HALL CHARLIE PARKER, DIZZY GILLESPIE, BUD POWELL (*Debut*)
- PITHECANTHROPUS ERECTUS CHARLES MINGUS (*Atlantic*)
- MONK'S MUSK THELONIOUS MONK (*Riverside*)
- THELONIOUS MONK & JOHN COLTRANE THELONIOUS MONK (*Riverside*)
- BRIGHT CORNERS THELONIOUS MONK (*Riverside*)
- EAST COASTING CHARLES MINGUS (*Affinity*)
- THE JIMMY GIUFFRÉ CLARINET JIMMY GIUFFRÉ (*Atlantic*)
- BLUE SERGE SERGE CHADOFF (*Affinity*)
- MEMORIAL CLIFFORD BROWN (*Blue Note*)
- JAZZ GIANTS 56 LESTER YOUNG (*Verve*)
- SONNY ROLLINS VOL. 2 SONNY ROLLINS (*Blue Note*)
- SAXOPHONE COLOSSUS SONNY ROLLINS (*Prestige*)
- COOKIN' MILES DAVIS (*Prestige*)
- RELAXIN' MILES DAVIS (*Prestige*)
- BLUE TRAIN JOHN COLTRANE (*Blue Note*)
- NEWK'S TIME SONNY ROLLINS (*Blue Note*)
- WAY OUT WEST SONNY ROLLINS (*Contemporary*)
- THE THIRD WORLD HERBIE NICHOLES (*Blue Note*)
- MINGUS AH-UM CHARLES MINGUS (*Atlantic*)
- JAZZ WORKSHOP GEORGE RUSSELL (*RCA*)
- GIANT STEPS JOHN COLTRANE (*Atlantic*)
- PORGY AND BESS MILES DAVIS (*CBS*)
- SMACK UP ART PEPPER (*Contemporary*)

- KIND OF BLUE MILES DAVIS (*CBS*)
- LOOKING AHEAD! CECIL TAYLOR (*Contemporary*)
- SOMETHING ELSE!! ORNETTE COLEMAN (*Contemporary*)
- TOMORROW IS THE QUESTION ORNETTE COLEMAN (*Contemporary*)
- PORTRAIT IN JAZZ BILL EVANS (*Riverside*)
- THE SHAPE OF JAZZ TO COME ORNETTE COLEMAN (*Atlantic*)
- CHANGE OF THE CENTURY ORNETTE COLEMAN (*Atlantic*)

THE 60s

- OUT OF THE COOL GIL EVANS (*Impulse*)
- THE LEGENDARY QUARTET ALBUM BOOKER LITTLE (*Island*)
- THIS IS OUR MUSK ORNETTE COLEMAN (*Atlantic*)
- MINGUS PRESENTS MINGUS CHARLES MINGUS (*Candid*)
- OUTWARD BOUND ERIC DOLPHY (*Prestige*)
- IRON MAN ERIC DOLPHY (*Douglas*)
- MONEY JUNGLE DUKE ELLINGTON (*Blue Note*)
- DUKE ELLINGTON & JOHN COLTRANE DUKE ELLINGTON & JOHN COLTRANE (*Impulse*)
- AT THE CAFE MONTPARTRIE CECIL TAYLOR (*Debut*)
- THE BLUES AND THE ABSTRACT TRUTH ORIVER NELSON (*Impulse*)
- OUT TO LUNCH ERIC DOLPHY (*Blue Note*)
- LIVE AT THE PLUGGED NICKEL MILES DAVIS (*CBS*)
- SOUL STATION HANK MOBLEY (*Blue Note*)
- LIVE AT THE VILLAGE VANGUARD BILL EVANS (*Riverside*)
- MOSAK ART BLAKEY (*Blue Note*)
- A LOVE SUPREME JOHN COLTRANE (*Impulse*)
- UNDER MILK WOOD STAN TRACEY (*Stanton*)
- THE BLACK SAINT AND THE SINNER LADY CHARLES MINGUS (*Impulse*)
- GHOSTS ALBERT AYLER (*Debut*)
- SPIRITUAL UNITY ALBERT AYLER (*ESP*)
- SPIRITS REJOICE ALBERT AYLER (*ESP*)
- VIBRATIONS ALBERT AYLER (*Arista Freedom*)
- MEDITATIONS JOHN COLTRANE (*Impulse*)
- AT THE GOLDEN CIRCLE VOL. I ORNETTE COLEMAN (*Blue Note*)
- ONE STEP BEYOND JACKIE MCLEAN (*Blue Note*)
- JUJU WAYNE SHORTER (*Blue Note*)

INTERSTELLAR SPACE JOHN COLTRANE (*Impulse!*)
 AT GREENWICH VILLAGE ALBERT AYLER (*Impulse!*)
 THE VILLAGE CONCERTS ALBERT AYLER (*ABC*)
 PRAYER FOR PEACE AMALGAM (*Transatlantic*)
 BROTHERHOOD OF BREATH CHRIS MCGREGOR (*RCA/News*)
 FIRE MUSIC ARCHIE SHEPP (*Impulse!*)
 MACHINE GUN PETER BROTZMANN (*FMP*)
 CADENTIA NOVA DANICA JOHN TCHICAI (*Polydor*)
 CRISIS ORNETTE COLEMAN (*ABC*)
 THE BAPTIST TRAVELLER TONY OXLEY (*CBS*)

THE 70s

NEW ORLEANS SUITE DUKE ELLINGTON (*Atlanta*)
 EXTRAPOLATION JOHN MCLAUGHLIN (*Polydor*)
 PEOPLE IN SORROW ART ENSEMBLE OF CHICAGO (*Neisa*)
 ON THE CORNER MILES DAVIS (*CBS*)
 NONAAM ROSCOE MITCHELL (*Sakville*)
 NEW YORK, FALL 74 ANTHONY BRAXTON (*Arista*)
 I CONCENTRATE ON YOU LEE KONITZ (*Strophase*)
 OPEN, TO LOVE PAUL RILEY (*ECM*)
 DOGON A.D. JULIUS HEMPHILL (*Arista Freedom*)
 FLOWERS FOR ALBERT DAVID MURRAY (*India Navigation*)
 HEAVY SPIRITS OLIVER LAKE (*Arista Freedom*)
 SOAPSUDS SOAPSUITS ORNETTE COLEMAN (*Artists House*)
 SPIRIT SENSITIVE CHICO TREFMAN (*India Navigation*)
 DES JAN GARBAREK (*ECM*)
 COMPANY TWO ANTHONY BRAXTON, EVAN PARKER, DE-
 REK BAILEY (*larc*)

THE 80s

MING DAVID MURRAY OCTET (*Black Saint*)
 DECODE YOURSELF RONALD SHANNON JACKSON &
 THE DECODING SOCIETY (*Antilles*)
 SEEDS OF TIME DAVID HOLLAND (*ECM*)
 SONG X PAT METHENY, ORNETTE COLEMAN (*Geffen*)
 LAST EXIT LAST EXIT (*Eneny*)
 IN ALL LANGUAGES ORNETTE COLEMAN (*Caravan Of*
Dreams)

'OUT TO LUNCH'



CHARLIE PARKER



ALBERT AYLER



SPIRITUAL UNITY

THE TOP TWELVE

1. OUT TO LUNCH ERIC DOLPHY (*Blue Note*)
2. THE SAVOY SESSIONS CHARLIE PARKER (*Savoy/RCA*)
3. SAXOPHONE COLOSSUS SONNY ROLLINS (*Prestige*)
4. THE BLUES AND THE ABSTRACT TRUTH OLIVER NELSON
(*Impulse!*)
5. GIANT STEPS JOHN COLTRANE (*Atlantic*)
6. KIND OF BLUE MILES DAVIS (*Columbia*)
7. BLUE SERGE SERGE CHALOFF (*Affinity*)
8. OUT OF THE COOL GIL EVANS (*Impulse!*)
9. PORTRAIT IN JAZZ BILL EVANS (*Prestige*)
10. JAZZ AT MASSY HALL CHARLIE PARKER, DEZZY
GILLESPIE ETC (*Debut*)
11. SPIRITUAL UNITY ALBERT AYLER (*ESP*)
12. THELONIOUS MONK & JOHN COLTRANE THELONIOUS
MONK & JOHN COLTRANE (*Riverside*)



We also asked contributors to vote separately for their favourite albums by the three musicians who are (arguably) the most influential of the post-Parker era: Miles Davis, John Coltrane and Ornette Coleman.

MILES DAVIS

1. *KIND OF BLUE* (CBS)
2. *LIVE AT THE PLUGGED NIKERL* (CBS)
3. *TUTU* (CBS)
4. *PORGY & BESS* (CBS)
5. *AGHARTA* (CBS)
6. *BIRTH OF THE COOL* (Capitol)
7. *COOKIN'* (Prestige)
8. *RELAXIN'* (Prestige)
9. *ON THE CORNER* (CBS)
10. *MILES SMILES* (CBS)



JOHN COLTRANE

1. *GIANT STEPS* (Atlantic)
2. *BLUE TRAIN* (Blue Note)
3. *A LOVE SUPREMACY* (Impulse)
4. *AFRICAN BRASS* (Impulse)
5. *MEDITATIONS* (Impulse)
6. *AFRO-BLUE IMPRESSIONS* (Pablo)
7. *INTERSTELLAR SPACE* (Impulse)
8. *COLTRANE* (Impulse)
9. *COLTRANE JAZZ* (Atlantic)
10. *LIVE IN PARIS* (Pablo)



ORNETTE COLEMAN

1. *AT THE GOLDEN CIRCLE VOL. I* (Blue Note)
2. *THE SHAPE OF JAZZ TO COME* (Atlantic)
3. *THIS IS OUR MUSIC* (Atlantic)
4. *CHANGE OF THE CENTURY* (Atlantic)
5. *CRISIS* (ABC)
6. *IN ALL LANGUAGES* (Caravan Of Dreams)
7. *TOMORROW IS THE QUESTION* (Contemporary)
8. *SOMETHING ELSE!!* (Contemporary)
9. *SOAPSUDS SOAPSUDS* (Artists House)
10. *CHAPPAQUA SUITE* (CBS)

HANK MOBLEY Chain Reaction

STANLEY TURRENTINE Blue Riff

JIMMY SMITH The Sermon

LEE MORGAN The Sidewinder • KENNY BURRELL Midnight Blue • CANNONBALL ADDERLEY Love For Sale



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HERBIE HANCOCK The Eye

ZWERIN

TAKE ME TO YOUR LEADER

THIS IS ABOUT METAPHYSICS. Actually, I'm not sure what that means so I looked it up. It means "abstruse physical science". Perfect. I don't know what abstruse means either, but it sounds good. So much for Aristotle.

I thought about metaphysics this summer, listening to Gil Evans, the Count Basie Orchestra and the 70th birthday big band put together by George Wein for Dizzy Gillespie. How does the physical presence of a leader affect the music being made? It is obvious with soloists. There would have been no Art Tatum trio without Art Tatum, no Zoot Sims or Sonny Rollins quartets without them. But on a larger scale it gets more . . . metaphysical.

Because he made everything seem so effortless, Basie was ironically known as the "little man who isn't there" even when he was there. Pianistically, he was a minimalist to put it mildly and as a conductor he wasn't exactly Leonard Bernstein. It would seem to be easy to go on without him, the arrangements are so stylized and pianistic Basie clones abound. But there does not seem to be much joy in Basieville these days. Freddie Green kept it chomping along for a while, but since his death the Basie band has become ghostly. A good band, just another band. Had he lived, Thad Jones might have found a way to add some juice to the essence. On the other hand, Mel Lewis seems to be doing quite nicely without Thad. Is that what abstruse means?

Dizzy played rare, short solos with his big band this summer. He has less endurance and Jon Faddis plays more interesting trumpet now. But Faddis (who was musical director) put the band together with love and it was a very good band and Dizzy was overjoyed to be leading his very own big band again. And make no mistake it was his, which it would not have been without John Birks occupying more than his own space in front of it. Communicating his joy by crescendoing with his arms or a wail of a hoarse cue into a brass tutti brought the personnel to that essential extra edge of conviction. Physics.

Now take Glenn Miller, the other extreme. His disappearance made no difference whatsoever, the band sounded the same before and after. (If anything, it got better with Tex Beneke.) Take a look at Miller's photograph, you'll see why. There's no face on his face. He was a reflection. As Jimmy Knepper says, "Isn't it a shame that Glenn Miller's music didn't die instead of Glenn Miller?" Which leads us to Charles Mingus.

Mingus Dynasty can walk pretty well on a musical level, although the energy level tends to droop. Knepper bears some responsibility for both. No "hit the ground running" kind of guy, his Mingusian arrangements and trombone nevertheless manage to raise the creator's spirit now and then. The interesting thing here is, in retrospect, how un-metaphysical Mingus was as a bassist. Some Dynasty bassists play more like Mingus than Mingus. But no Dynasty will ever have the fragrance of the three-star chef who cooked it up in the first place.

Michel Conant reviewed a recent concert by the George Russell

big band in *Le Monde*. "Only the galvanizing, spiritual and overwhelming physical presence of George Russell would have been able to extract all their resources from these musicians — he solicits their energy at the center of their gravity . . . Nothing cerebral here, just a passionate requisition of their entire beings." (I just put this in to impress you, it ain't easy to read *Le Monde*.)

Nothing passionate about the Bob Wilbur big band trying to raise the ghosts of Benny Goodman, Fletcher Henderson, Duke Ellington, Harry James and the entire swing era in one set. Nothing wrong with trying, just not much fun — at least judging from the slumping, unsmiling sidemen. Also not so metaphysical. Paraphrasing Gertrude Stein, there was no there there.

Although he was underrated as a pianist, Duke Ellington did not apparently do much except be elegant once he worked out his arrangements, hired the guys and worked with them for ten years. They'd learned how to turn chaos into art, he'd hired them to do that in the first place. He was a master caster, a director in the theatrical sense. A band bearing his name still exists, but if Ellington's spirit is in fact among us it has scratched the body of Gil Evans.

Talk about casting — replacing Miles Davis with Johnny Coles and Cannonball with David Sanborn automatically makes Gil Evans eligible for some hall of fame or other. He is a reincarnation of (his name's anagram) Svengali. Sanborn says "he just makes a sideways motion with his hands and somehow we all play sideways." Gil once explained his leadership principles: "We don't even need written music any more. Hiram (Bullock) or I strike a chord and away we'll go, improvising ensembles and everything for 10 or 15 minutes. I tell the players not to be terrified by the vagueness. If it looks like we're teetering on the edge of



Diz
arrives
with
band

formlessness, somebody's going to be so panicked that they'll do something about it. I depend on that. If it has to be me, I'll do it, but I'll wait and wait because I want somebody else to do it. I want to hear what's going to happen."

The leaders whose presence is required have that in common. They wait to hear something happen that would not happen if they were not waiting for it. This is the core of the difference between so-called "serious" music and jazz. At least I think so. Sorry if that sounds abstruse but metaphysics give me a headache.



BACKDROP PAINTED BY MIKE WILES

99% PERSUASIVE:
Annie Griffin
Builds an Art
Round Woman's
Voice

TEXT: CYNTHIA ROSE
PHOTO: LEAH GORIKON

Performance art began with artists who wished to communicate, not possess, their art — who made art projects rather than art objects. Evolved from deficiencies in avantgarde as well as mainstream art, music, and dance, it has always been a slippery discipline. And these days, its aura attracts the publicity-hungry, lower-case shock troops — the academics, the entrepreneurs of nightclub life, and those who play at politics by dressing like social outlaws.

Most have a point to prove or a case to argue; few would allow their 'art' to be changed or shaped by chance and circumstance. Yet curiosity leading to discovery is the very heart of the genre, and the improvisatory tussle with change is what gives the art its edge.

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For true performance practitioners, the audience is a sentient partner whose apprehensions inform the whole shebang. And, at best, this partnership is deepened instead of abused. Performance artists avoid "realistic" presentation not to shock, but to goad viewers into a more profound register of what is being shown and said.

Performance artist Annie Griffin was born in New York, but trained with London-based collective the 1982 Theatre Company. Her current solo pieces – like *Blackbeard: A Private* and *Almost Persuaded* (developed from the Tammy Wynette song) – have brought British performance a welcome injection of cross-culture expertise.

Griffin's pitate tale is set in a careful context of history and personality. Gestures support or contradict her words; white string looped over a wire across the stage billows into an armada of 17th century ships when she swatches on a fan; snowy sugar cascades onto the stage floor – giving us the island shapes of Blackbeard's Caribbean. The resonance of sound – like the modulation of Griffin's voice – shapes the impact of all her pieces. Griffin places no definition or limitation on her work. "But coming from theatre," she says, "my primary rule is to care about the audience – as they must care about you. However provocative you are, you must keep the audience with you. Because, at times, you will choose to deliberately violate their expectations."

"WHAT I MEAN," she continues, "is to do a piece about rape and never make the audience uncomfortable – like *Blackbeard* – is actually more shocking than miming rape with a banana. Or, in *Almost Persuaded*, which for me boils down to a piece about sexual violence, to talk about women loving their husbands – to examine that and make the audience cry – is more shocking than the macho school of performance art. You know, 'This is my bodily function and you can't handle that, can you?'"

The arsenal of the performance artist – irony, image, gesture and vocal timbre – is the armoury of intuition and emotional resource. Thus its dialogues are particularly good at restoring woman's voice, it thrives on those female perceptions and conflicts society tries to ignore. And it is no accident women's work has dominated the progress (as opposed to the official history) of performance art. The pundits may profile Robert Wilson and Chris Burden, but the artists watch Hannah Wilke and Pina Bausch.

The female voice as instrument gave Griffin the genesis of *Almost Persuaded*. "Before I did solo work, I saw women like Rose English and Jenny Seagrove onstage, calling themselves performance artists. And it was really strong to me: they were alone up there, creating everything they were doing. The genre itself seemed to me a political form."

"But," she continues, "Tammy Wynette's songs do that to me, just like Patsy Cline's or Ella Fitzgerald's do. That's what I try and say in the piece: that this one song, which I play five times, is so tremendously complicated you can read it on many levels."

"Because it's a song about being tempted but not giving in. And she has perfect control of the way she phrases it. Why is that? How can it be? What does it really mean, such strong women singing about how weak they are? She's singing country, of course, but there are complete parallels in soul music and jazz ballads."

Much of *Almost Persuaded* is a monologue to a husband who's left. "Um, it's deliberately very banal. I talk about my kitchen, then I talk about the farm – and of course there's been a drought. Then I talk about death and I just say it's been really hard. It's the idea of telescoping out from a small place." The sequence includes Griffin extorting *The Kitty Wells Story* with its sleeve-art headshot of Wells, from a stack of records. She puts it on, tips the microphone towards the picture of Kitty's mouth, and sits through "Please Release Me, Let Me Go", listening.

"It's interesting, those moments. I never sought to play gallery spaces. But now I'm realising people have very strong ideas about what belongs in galleries and what doesn't: what is art and what isn't. And if something is really clear and straightforward and understandable and to do with a popular form, then people think it doesn't belong there. It's like saying Tammy Wynette isn't complicated enough to be art."

Performance art, of course, exists to disregard such boundaries. And, for Griffin, it's that freedom – not the title – which attracts. "It's the playing with form, the making of forms myself, which makes it seem appropriate to call myself an artist. The basic point is, you're asking different things from an audience: you're asking more."

"It's a different idea of development; instead of character development. Or the conventional development of character in the songs that women sing. But it's very contemporary because you have an audience which is used to pop video and other non-narrative forms. Not an audience who grew up on ballads and stories and books and plays that go from A to Z. What I'm developing is different responses to how certain stories and events and musics can affect you."

The National Review of Live Art, Britain's Performance Festival, runs from Oct 8-11 at London's Riverside Studios. Annie Griffin appears there on Oct 8 and at the ICA from Nov 23-Dec 6. *ALMOST PERSUADED* will also tour to: Usher Gallery, Lincoln (Oct 2); Traverse Theatre, Edinburgh (Oct 27-Nov 1); Powerhouse Theatre, Trent Poly, Nottingham (Nov 2); Leadmill, Sheffield (Nov 18).



ARGUELLES BROS

SAXOPHONE AND DRUMS KEEP IT IN THE FAMILY

WORDS/STEVE: RICHARD COOK

WORDS/JULIAN: MARK SINKER

PHOTOGRAPHY: ROBERT TORBET

Among the select number of Britain's jazz families, the name Arguelles is already spoken with respect. The brothers Steve (drums and percussion) and Julian (saxophones) are each in the process of creating a significant role amidst the young leaders of the new music: Steve with Human Chain, Iain Ballamy's Iains and others, Julian as a freelance and with his brother in their trio Arguelles. Both are also charter members of Loose Tubes. In this exclusive interview, they talk about the problems and rewards of putting jazz in the family way.

S T E V E

Steve Arguelles is not a man of great physical stature. His pointed face seems to

peer out of a diminished frame: a lion's mane of hair sprouts out of his scalp, but his round glasses and pale gaze are anything but leonine. When he was younger, Steve was tiny, and it brought him immediate problems as the drummer in a school orchestra: he had to carry the tympani upstairs after rehearsal. There *had* to be something better than that. So he switched to a kit, and ended up clattering about in a jazz group.

Today, he is among the few British drummers it's worth crossing the road to hear. "What's brilliant about Steve," says one fellow player, "is that he's always listening. He's got the technique and the enthusiasm to react really quickly to what somebody else is doing, but he can feed people loads of ideas too."

Some recent appearances I've seen confirm that Arguelles could be reshaping the drummer's entire role in British jazz. We have a soft spot for eccentric drummers here — Phil Seamen, Ginger Baker — but they've not exactly been selfless figures. Arguelles always plays for and with the band. His excellent chops let him lead from the rear when he wants to, throwing in time changes for the hell of it — with Iain Ballamy's band, in company with mischief-makers like Iain and Django Bates, the music changes direction all the time, but always with some point of interest as the motive.

"If anything, people ask me to play louder. I do make a lot of noise but I play quietly in terms of volume. I try to be sensitive to the room I'm in — you don't hit your snacks out and pretend you're at Ronnie Scott's when you're playing in a little room."

Although he can do that when he wants to. Sometimes Steve works in a duo with Russell, a Trinidadian pianist with a penchant for an Erroll Garner style. There he makes everything crisp and on-the-nose. With Human Chain, a trio of eternally open ends, he might tattle on hand drums or thunder through a tattoo. In Arguelles, his trio with brother Julian, it's quietly straight-ahead. With Loose Tubes, surely among the most difficult drum roles at present, he has a knack for finding the right touch between swinging large-scale responses and more impressionist percussive ideas.

It is a big book of engagements. Steve is among the most in-demand members of the Tubes clan, who often seem like they're involved in practically every new band on the scene.

"Yeah, The Jazz Masons or something," he smiles. "Know what you mean. But the gigs come in, you want to do them . . . I think some things are opening out a bit more now. I'm in favour of having deps in the band more. It's important to get someone who'll contribute something,

maybe someone who's actually better than yourself."

Better than himself? This is not what we expect drummers to say. Arguelles will be having a testing time of it this month in particular, when he embarks on a duo tour with Steve Lacy. The great soprano man has never played with Steve before, perhaps never even heard him. In turn, Arguelles hasn't exactly taken O levels in Lacy's work. The tour is a promoter's idea, and an intriguing one. The Steves met for the first time in Venice a few weeks ago.

Meanwhile, a drummer's diary is still fairly full. This autumn he is also playing with pianist John Taylor. They have agreed that Steve will be working there with hand-drums and objects rather than a full kit. Makes you wonder if Arguelles ever gets confused, with all these different settings to work his way into; but he seems to thrive on the freshness.

"When you get a certain thing together, it's hard to work in London for instance. It's really difficult to work with Human Chain here. You get less money here than anywhere else in the country, which might seem incredible. People are more into it outside London. Promoters can greet you with open arms.

"But, you know, everybody moans. If you're a French band it's just as hard to get gigs in Paris. And they say they want to get gigs over here." And we don't exactly see French players packing British stages.

Steve isn't moaning. Along with Steve Noble and one or two others, he's opening the drummer's time and space in every sense. Maybe that old eccentric tag will finally fade away: drummers should be an honoured species too.

J U L I A N

"I've listened to the normal people: Sonny Rollins, Coltrane, Wayne Shorter. But

other people have been an influence on me too. Iain Ballamy, because he's a close friend, and because I really admire his playing. My brother's been a big influence on me. Dewey Redman. Tubes have been a big influence. Django. JT (John Taylor) of Azymuth. Kenny Wheeler. There's a lot of English musicians I really admire. There's a lot of great music. Because you see those more than you see Charlie Parker, they become more of a direct influence."

Julian Arguelles has just returned from a series of dates with Chris McGregor's Brotherhood of Breath — where he played alongside Steve Williamson, Annie Whitehead, Chris Biscoe, as well as Johnny Dyani's son Thomas — and we meet after the Jazz Warriors' showcase for *Out Of Many, One People* at Ronnie's. It seems to fit. Just at the point where New British Jazz is bursting off in the most unlikely directions, its many players appear united in interest with

one another. Arguelles' vinyl debut – outside ensemble work – was playing the last chorus on Django's *Sâid Afrika*. It was a tribute to the immense debt British players owe South African exiles – and at least a part of that debt is a recognition of Britain's own independent strengths, away from a Stateside shadow that sometimes threatens to smother its children.

Arguelles is sensible, practical, down-to-earth, not a natural frontliner or radical. But when he takes the stand he takes care of business with a quiet sense of purpose that leaves its mark just as much as the way he looks, small and mobile. He doesn't seem to be given to flights of fancy – except maybe for the name Arguelles. Both the Crook brothers have taken it: it's their mother's.

"She's Spanish. In Spain you can choose whether you take your father's name or your mother's – so it seemed OK."

But maybe there's another sign that he's something of a romantic underneath it all – the fact that he's chosen to make his career as a saxophone player in a country which has never been hugely beneficent towards his music, or even tolerably intelligent. Especially when he started: the institutions set up to fuel it sometimes seemed to be nothing but enemy agents. He knows all about that. He went through the Midlands Youth Jazz Orchestra and NYJO without fond memories of either. What was wrong with them?

"I'm trying to think of a polite way of putting it. Attitude, mainly. Attitude towards music, and other things as well, but mainly music. To put it crudely NYJO was into things being fast, loud and high. Reading was really important. It was all geared up to big band playing, session music, that sort of area. Not too many working musicians ever came out of NYJO."

The big bands making a noise at the moment couldn't be more different. They may not have much in common with each other either, but Loose Tubes and the Warriors share a working freedom towards a lot of things.

"That's the way it should be. At least individual members have something to contribute. They're not just a dep, another tenor player. In NYJO you were nobody till you stood up and did a solo."

That's the problem with Education towards Improvisa-

tion, or whatever. It always looks backwards. We talk a bit about overbearing influences, the Coltrane-Brecker-Berklee College problem. Is it valuable to learn chops, or does it hold you back?

"I'm not sure about this. My brother I think would say it's really healthy not to be able to read, or not to be able to play your instrument particularly well. There's ways of doing it, the schooled way, and not the schooled way. And I think I agree that you don't particularly have to study Parker and then Coltrane to get what you want."

Tubes are working – still changing, he says, with his brother playing freer than ever – and his Quartet with Simon Purcell is also making the rounds. McGregor's been



This

page:

Julian.

Previous

page:

Steve

and gone. What did Arguelles learn from him?

"Mainly the spirit, and his concept. It's really healthy, the concept. The band's extremely loose, which I find nice. Tubes is loose, but not as loose as Chris McGregor. Anything I did Chris loved. He wouldn't say, oh, that sounds shit, don't do that again. He'd never say that. Because he thinks whatever you do at that particular time, that's the best you could have done at that time, and the most natural thing. So it's OK. Which is really great."

James Carr the Awesome Tongue

*Human soul stretched to the
limits by this unsung voice*

WORDS: BARNEY HOSKINS

THE SOUTHERN Soul Man has a special place in the pantheon of black vocal artists. He is the heavyweight, the voice with the bigger punch. If *les femmes*, too, have their KO voices, the Soul Man's special power comes precisely – paradoxically – from the breaking of his male strength and dignity, from his being reduced to the abjection of a child.

Otis Redding was Mr Soul because he was a big broad-shouldered ox with "a'il pain in my heart" that made him choke and splutter. We love this humbling of the Soul Man, the Mr Pitiful archetype, because it permits us the vicarious sensation of dropping our cool and releasing our own pain. Catharsis, it's called, and the church-reared Soul Man of the 60s is the most potent symbol of this catharsis available to us. In him all the vanities and fripperies of showbiz have been stripped away, leaving only an anonymous figure in a

sweat-soaked suit and a voice of elemental woe.

We turn this pain into something heroic, Herculean. Just as gospel singers like Archie Brownlee or Julius Cheeks were rated according to their ability to "wreck the church" (bring the house down), so the "greatest" Soul Man is he who, as a spectacle of heartbreak, most debases himself. Hence the temptation to excess, exaggeration, self-parody. Already it's a cliché that in his last years Otis Redding was parodying himself to death.

A singer who took his cue from the early Stax ballad style of Otis Redding, and who currently has many fans and critics proclaiming him the greatest of

all Soul Men, was James Carr, who recorded fourteen singles for the Memphis label Goldwax in the second half of the 60s, then more or less bowed out of the business. A cult legend to deep soul maniacs the world over, his name meant little to anyone else until Peter Guralnick told his sad story in last year's definitive *Sweet Soul Music*. Now Upside Records in New York have compiled fourteen of his greatest performances on *At The Dark End Of The Street* and subtitled the album 'The World's Greatest Soul Singer'.

Handsomely packaged with a liner-note from Guralnick, it's a stupendous collection by any reckoning, and an exemplary testament to the genus Soul Man. The dominant style is country-soul, that exquisite Southern marriage of

black gospel intensity and white country restraint which produced so many great records from Memphis, Nashville, and Muscle Shoals, Alabama. The title track itself is one of the supreme achievements in this mode, a sombre and doom-filled ballad of guilty adultery written by whites Chips Moman and Dan Penn:

*I know time's gonna take its toll
We have to pay for the love we stole
It's a sin and we know it's wrong
Oh, but our love keeps comin' on strong*

Of the other selections, most were penned by Carr's producer Quinton Claunch, a country veteran who'd worked at Sun and co-founded Hi, or by O B McClinton, a black writer who was to follow in Charley Pride's footsteps and become a *bona fide* country singer. McClinton's "Forgetting You" is about as close as soul music gets to country'n'western, while Claunch songs like "Love Attack" and "That's The Way Love Turned Out For Me" are some of the most blistering, heart-breaking ballads ever written. The players on these records, too, were almost all white country boys. Between Bobby Wood's country-church piano embellishments and Reggie Young's quicksilver guitar fills they set the perfect understated backdrop to Carr's shattering vocal flights.

It is not outrageous to claim that Carr's is the greatest of all male soul voices. Certainly only Solomon Burke has sounded so raw, so *inflamed*, and simultaneously maintained such effortless control. Carr's is a deep, rich baritone, not plummy nasal like Percy Sledge's, rather an elastic instrument that can leap from the velvety croon of a Joe Simon to the hoarse, frenzied shrieks of a Wilson Pickett. Its resonance is cavernous, its shadings and undulations subterranean. "The way this guy sang really made goose pimples break out all over me", says his original mentor Roosevelt Jamison. "His voice was a voice of humbleness and yet power." Jamison found Carr singing in gospel group the Harmony Echoes, and it's raw gospel passion that you hear in these records, a voice of agonised yearning to be made whole, to be one with the beloved. At its most intense the hurt is positively frightening: "It's just holding on to a hot wire/ I can't turn it loose", he wails on "Love Attack", and the voice sounds as if it's about to splinter in its pain.

Every line of these songs is delivered with a burning, vivid intensity, every word wrenched from the throat and yet placed immaculately. The artistry of this illiterate, paralytically shy man is simply thrilling. His timing and phrasing leave the likes of Redding and Pickett trailing in the dust. Where other Soul Men get lazy, resorting to what Jerry Wexler called "oversoul", Carr is always tight, subtle, instinctively careful. Even when the voice frays and rebels in the last gasped bars of the ballads, there is a

tormented kind of control at work, a reining in of abandon. "James Carr had an emotional power that really stirred me up", says Chips Moman. "I could have sat and listened to him all day. He never got anywhere near what he should have been, which was an all-time great."

So why wasn't Carr an official all-time great? Why did he never achieve the success of Redding, Burke, Pickett, or Tex? Partly, I think, because he didn't want it, because, as Roosevelt Jamison says, he was "kinda slow and childlike" and ill-equipped to handle the cutthroat business of touring and promoting. "James was very reserved, a real religious-type person", recalls Quinton Claunch. "It was hard to get a conversation out of him." But also because the passion of his voice was too real, too naked, to cross over in the way his peers did.

The rapid downfall of this mighty innocent, this holy fool who spoke in such awesome tongue, is recounted in depressing detail by Peter Guralnick, who, while researching *Sweet Soul Music*, found him "practically narcoleptic" in a South Memphis housing project. Drugs have unquestionably played their part in Carr's disintegration, but there is, and has always been, a more fundamental instability there. The 70s began for him with the promise of a big deal from Capital, but a jail sentence in Florida soon put paid to that. Atlantic had him for one reasonable side, "I'll Put It To You", but never followed up. The only support over the years has come from Roosevelt Jamison, who produced him on one independently-financed single in 1977 – the voice was still there even if all the marbles weren't – and took him to Japan, land of deep soul freaks, in 1979. (A short tour ended prematurely when Carr took too many of his antidepressants and became spellbound onstage.) Today he is as desperate and bereft of hope as he always sounded in those records, a monstrous talent incapable of expressing itself. "This old world keeps on turnin' without me/ And that's the way love turned out for me..."

The greatest of all the Southern Soul Men? I think perhaps yes. For all the other worthy claimants to such a throne – and there are several equally obscure names among them – I know of no voice quite so dauntingly, shockingly powerful.

Barney Hoskyns' *Say It One Time For The Brokenhearted: The Country Side of Southern Soul* will be published by Fontana in November, price £4.95. *James Carr: At The Dark End of the Street* is available from: Upside Records, Suite 1109, 225 Lafayette St, New York, New York 10012 USA (212-925-9599) or from Soul Bowl, PO Box 3, Kings Lynn, Norfolk UK (0553-840895).



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S O U N D C H E C K

In this month's section: the new releases from
ANDY SHEPPARD and THE JAZZ WARRIORS plus
classic reissues by WAYNE SHORTER and GRANT
GREEN, together with the cream of
new global vinyl.

ANDY SHEPPARD (Antilles)

Recorded: London 21-25 July 1987

Java Jive, Finesse, Sol, Want A Toffee, Coming Second, Two, Liquid

Andy Sheppard (ss, ts), Dave Buxton (p), Pete Maxfield (b), Simon Gore (d). On "Java Jive", "Sol", "Want A Toffee" and "Coming Second", add Orphy Robinson (vib) and Mamadi Kantara (perc). On "Want A Toffee", "Coming Second" and "Liquid", add Randy Brecker (t). On "Java Jive", add Dave De Fries (t), Nick Evans (tb), Jerry Underwood, Paul Dartnall (ts).

I'M FIED UP trying to choose "the pick of new tenors", or whatever. We should be applauding that there's so many putting out so much that's worth hearing and discussing. Perhaps the saxophone could use a redundancy period – let us forget trumpets, trombones, pianos etc – but it seems it has a way to run yet. Getting a reed player out of a live setting and satisfactorily on to disc is the next dilemma: on this really extraordinarily confident debut, Andy Sheppard appears to have cracked it on one.

Sheppard is so close to being the complete saxophonist that you want to put a glass case around him before some damage gets done. He has the forthright, vulcanised tenor sound that's been passed ceremonially on from the great hard bop masters, while his soprano has the same kind of quickness of attack and fullness of timbre – he actually seems to transpose from one register to another with little effort, instead of punching himself inwards like so many tenor-to-soprano players. Sometimes he sounds a little too fond of the bubbling rhetorical line on the higher horn: "Esme", for example, is a clever display of fast fingering which doesn't seem to lead anywhere in particular. But most of the programme and the playing is wrought with great care and intelligence.

"Esme" is framed on the first side by two rousing originals. "Java Jive" is almost a big band chart, with simple and effective scoring for the horns, a mildly haunting theme, incisive loops of soprano from the leader and a flavoursome commentary from Nick Evans's trombone. "Sol" winds through a slow, hazy intro on tenor – a favourite Sheppard device – before a soprano improvisation over a rocking vamp figure. It's the sort of pace that quickly becomes supine in the pendulum rhythm, but the group play hard enough to make it interesting.

The second side is more close-knit. Randy

Brecker's three guest spots offer some concentrated, even harsh solos – the one he takes on the otherwise amiable "Want A Toffee" seems especially pent-up, and it contrasts agreeably with what is otherwise a grooving, joyful piece. Sheppard dips into a solo one could call rollcalling, pummelled by the members of his basic quartet, all of whom play at a consistently high level. "Coming Second" is even hotter, angling at some of the brisk rise and fall of a good Messengers work-out; "Two" comes on like a knowing tilt at Grover Washington's windmill, and that security of knowledge might be the keynote to the entire record.

It's as though Sheppard is already comprehensively in command: he is, after all, a bit older than many of the new players, more practised, less obviously playful, less of a message-bearer. *Andy Sheppard* concentrates on his less exploratory side, and as a set of compositions it's less ambitious than it might have been. But this is conceived as a witty, accomplished record, not an awkward test drive through available options. And Steve Swallow's production is a model of woadscreen clarity. A brilliant first entry, on all counts

RICHARD COOK

BUD SHANK AT JAZZ ALLEY (Contemporary C-14027)

Recorded: Seattle, 16-8 October 1986

A Nightingale Sang In Berkeley Square, Softly, Too Long At The Fair, Arise, Sing For Lady Love, I Love You Porgy, Woke, Bud's Theme

Bud Shank (ss), Dave Peck (p), Chuck Deardoff (b), Jeff Hamilton (d)

THE CONTRAST between Bud Shank's work in the confines of the commercially successful LA4 and what he's up to now is provoking and refreshing, but let's not go over the top. This record is not "the most furious of loft mouthings" (to quote Tony Heenington in *August's Wire*) and anyone buying it for that could only be disappointed. What it is is a warm mainstream bop record that charms and impresses by turns. The moment it starts and Bud Shank's confident, lightly swinging alto plays "A Nightingale Sang In Berkeley Square" you know it's going to be a good one. There's a hint of "Campdown Races" in his introduction, and who's to deny Bud the right to some cheerful celebration with his recommitment to bebop principles?

With "Too Long At The Fair" he shows the pace down with an authority that would be icy

if it were not full of good humour. The legacy of bop alto is so painful – Bird's angst-ridden virtuosity, Jackie McLean's sour desperation, Dolphy's joyous hopelessness – that Bud Shank's happy improvisations have one rushing to pre-bop for comparisons: he's obviously absorbed the romanticism of an Ellington-like Johnny Hodges. Nevertheless, at the close of "Too Long At The Fair" he quotes Fats Waller's "Jitterbug Waltz", a tune used by Eric Dolphy (and subsequently Arthur Blythe) to demonstrate how much their fascination with stretched intervals, with the skipping possibilities of modernist alto, were prefigured (grounded) in ragtime and the blues.

Bud Shank's fellow musicians don't compete – Bud adds dynamics that simply are not there when he's laying off – but they are not fatuous for all that. Dave Peck's piano is reticent and commendably sparse, Chuck Deardoff's bass calm and singing. Jeff Hamilton's drumming is so skilled that you hardly notice it.

As the record progresses Bud plays steadily more "out", "Woke" is full of contemporary key changes and major chords, the instruments drifting off from another with a modal, European feel. He pulls it back with a punchy solo, the easy ache of his tone developing a bluesy rasp for the unlikely twists and angles of his attack. "Bud's Theme" closes the set, a blues played with affection and singleness and a nod to late Coltrane. This record doesn't represent the cutting edge of modern jazz, but it sits without fuss or pretension in the bop tradition (so it sounds pretty good too).

BEN WATSON

STAN SULZMANN & JOHN TAYLOR EVERYBODY'S SONG BUT MY OWN? (Loose Tubes LTLP 004)

Recorded: No date or place

Introduction To No Particular Song, The Little Feller, Old Ballad, Mudd Man, Everybody's Song But My Own, Gipsy, So Lady, Gun Suite – Part One, Some Yankin' Wails

Stan Sulzmann (ss, ts, cl, f), John Taylor (p)

AM I ALONE in finding duo records hard to get to grips with? They seem to be either strenuously working out, conscious perhaps of a sense of both togetherness and isolation (of the furious Pullen/Graves items) or forever modestly in reverse, equally conscious of their togetherness and isolation (of Bill Evans/Jim Hall or Chet Baker/Paul Bley). Though the frequency of such outings is increasing, the nature of duo playing seems to remain a form

that jazz rarely cracks. There are exceptions: the Armstrong/Hines "Weather Bird" (from 1928) remains a beauty, and thirty years later the Rollins/Phil Joe "Surrey With The Fringe On Top" worked perfectly, but these were essentially one-off's. Maybe creating three or five minutes in this mode rather than forty or fifty has validity.

Yet in some ways it suits musicians such as we have here. There is something thoroughly Anglicised (or if you want the edge taken off that statement, Europeanised) about this music. It is academic in the best and only honest sense, controlled by technique and what seems like conscious awareness of what they're about; it is a music far removed from overtly popular culture, distinctly played for itself as a first premise rather than for entertainment and with a view to an audience which will never be large but which generally will have a sophisticated grasp of who they are, who the musicians are, and why both sides find themselves in this relationship.

At times, it satisfied. The absent presence – forgive the contradiction – is Kenny Wheeler, who wrote all the lines, and some of them are excellent. "Old Ballad" calls forth some excellent playing, and the provocative "Gigolo" conjures up a delightful clarinet and piano tae-dance tango which fills up with imagery. Against these have to be balanced the desperately twee "Little Fella" and, all too frequently, a touch of New Age: the second time I played this disc I really didn't notice when it finished. This may be the problem here, it's music that often doesn't demand your attention because it assumes it's going to get it.

JACK COOKE

STEVE LACY THE JAGUAR SESSIONS (Fresco Jazz FJ 1)

Recorded, New York, 8 August 1954.

Anatole, As Is A Morning Sunrise, For Company, Virginia, I Would Do Anything For You, Liza, How About You, You're Lucky To Me (2 takes), Peg O' My Heart (Dick Surton (t), Ray Anderson (tb), Steve Lacy (cl, ss); Don Satterfield (bs), Mark Trail (b), Bill DeHay (dr).

Recorded, New York, 24 November 1954

At Long At I Love (3 takes), My Old Flame, A Foggy Day (4 takes), Let's Get Away From It All (3 takes), Mood (2 takes), Love Me Or Leave Me (3 takes), Footnote (3 takes), Sunday (3 takes), Jazz Me Blues, John Welch (trb), replaces Anderson; Frank Caputo (b) replaces Satterfield.



THE ORIGINAL TITLES of these fantastically rare records, *Jazz Idiom* and *Progressive Dixieland*, suggest a collegiate, analytical air. Dick Surton's Sextet was a sober band by the sound of it, but they played their music with the tenderness and affection that young men often have before the world knocks it out of them. This isn't really dixieland – it's too demure and graceful for that – but it isn't suave or worldly enough to qualify as the hard-bitten mainstream which men like Dickenson and Clayton were putting down at the time. Lacy's sleeve comment cites Beiderbecke, Bobby Hackett and Igor Stravinsky as possible influences, and those rice-paper textures are what one remembers (along with the Mulliganish ensemble sound which the baritone lends).

The records have been reissued because of Lacy's presence on what were his debut sessions. At 20 years old, he already sounds calmly informed, and the simple poise of his solos, which seem to dance on the rhythms, is actually charming. Rhythmically, these are remarkable sides. Bill DeHay relies on brushwork, Mark Trail is nimble, and the music has a fluency and sweetness that derives from their unselfish support. The 'progressive' quality is the sort which the New Yorkers of the 20s were exploring: solos carefully counterpointed by discreet ensemble backing, subtle variation on the weight of the sound "Peg O' My Heart", the sort of tune that Red Nichols dwelt on, has all its sentimental parts refined away by their treatment.

Perhaps the second LP of alternate takes is an unnecessary luxury: the extra music is only more of the same, and it makes this rather expensive on import. But it's worth hearing for trumpeter Dick Surton, whose delicate

phrasing and insinuating tone made one wish that he, like the others, hadn't faded into complete obscurity. Only the podgy young fellow on the cover has stuck around.

RICHARD COOK

LENNY PICKERT WITH THE BORNEO HORNS (Hannibal Records HNBL 1321)

Recorded:

Dance Music for Borneo Horns #1, Solo for Saxophone and Tape, Dance Music for Borneo Horns #2, Light #2 for seven winds and piano, Dance Suite – Suite No. 1, Dance Music for Borneo Horns #4, Dance Suite – Suite No. 1, Dance Music for Borneo Horns #5 (Mood Borneo), Landings
Lenny Pickert (ts, clts, flts); with Borneo Horns: Steve Elson (bs, ss), Stan Harrison (as), and Laurie Pinn, Nelson Bogart (t, flts), Dave Rangenon (trb), Howard Johnson (tba), Ned Sublette (6 str bps), Lenny Clouden (dr), Roger Squitro (perc).

ALMOST ALL this music is written for dance. Fortunately, it works very well without. Like Philip Glass, Pickert has turned his hand to Doris Lessing's endlessly mineable "Canopus in Argos: Archives" sequence; "Septet" is for Marta Renzi's version of *The Marriage Between Zones Three And Four*.

Connections with Glass stop there. Pickert's minimalism is limited to a stripped-down melody line and strict tempo with a contrapuntal approach that is reminiscent of one of those hoek'n'scream outfalls on *Largactil*. Far from the old freak show staple, these are the Very Cooled Out Men from Borneo.

It's all disarmingly simple and jovial but beautifully conceived and played with a clever use of resources. Soling is basic. The real strength is in the arrangement, which is as

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good as anything heard on record this year. Technicalities apart, it probably doesn't bear that much analysis. Danceable? You betcha.

BRIAN MORTON

JOHN HARLE

HABANERA

(Hannibal HNBL 1331)

Recorded: 24 and 25 April, 1987.

Baroque: Three Folkways From The Country Of Cuba, Satin. Gymnopédie I; Waltz: Elly For Trane, Gertrude: Three Preludes For Piano, Villa-Lobos: Fantasia; De Rose Deep Purple, Bennett: These From "Tender Is The Night" (Naxos) These/Rosemary's Waltz, Poulenc: Homage To Edith Piaf (Impressario in C Minor); Debussy/Trane: London. Syzygy, Ravel/Trane: Vaud. Habanera, Heath: Out Of The Cool.

John Harle (ss, as); John Lenehan (p).

FROM "JAZZ AGE" to "Crack-Up", Scott Fitzgerald's world was haunted by the impure, fallen sound of the saxophone. Its pitch held just this side of dissonance, the sax perfectly expressed an era whose hedonism masked an underlying hysteria. That was the painful theme of Fitzgerald's *Tender Is The Night*, brilliantly dramatized for the BBC by Dennis Potter and scored by Richard Rodney Bennett.

John Harle, in less rambunctious form than with his Berliner Band, plays the haunting theme more or less straight and with a clarity of tone that falls somewhere between obse and clannet. His remarkable technique is most clearly demonstrated on the unaccompanied "Synna", the familiar Debussy melody lent an added depth by the echoey acoustic. There is, though, in this and the Ravel "Habanera" a slight soft-centredness that reaches into the rest of the album. All the effort goes into texture. "Gymnopédie I" (which must have been the message-in-the-bottle in Bennett's unconscious when he turned to Fitzgerald) is weary from overwork; given so much tellingly exposure, it needs a brisker rendering. Gershwin's "Preludes" are paper music; this was the perfect opportunity for some imaginative obbligato playing from Harle (who's silent, as per the score); respectful performances are a bit redundant when the original doesn't really demand such deference.

The best of the album comes in the Bartok pieces and in the two homages to John Coltrane and Piaf. The first of the latter sounds accurately close to the "Naima" with a rising figure in the second and third bars in place of *rhar* familiar fall. In both these pieces, and to some extent in the Villa-Lobos as well, there's a better balance between the sax and piano parts. John Lenehan is too good to be

consigned to passive accompaniment.

Harle isn't the first saxophonist to be drawn to Bartok. Lee Konitz featured three items from the still-unstimulated *Microcosmos* for piano on his *Peaceful* in 1969. Harle doesn't delve into the harmonic possibilities. The Cak songs are made to sound as innocently bucolic as if played on a wooden pipe at dawn.

An odd album and not altogether a successful one. It'll go down well in wine bars but apart from students of embouchure (who'll feel like cutting their throats) I can't see anyone being wildly enthused.

BRIAN MORTON

SKETCH

COLORBLIND

(PVK Records ZAT3)

Recorded: London, 1987.

Wanting You, Cool For Love, Out The Front Door, Home, What Can You Do?, Family Ties, Don't Tell Me I'm Not, Rise, Burning Up, Road Between The Lanes (Arny Shuck 1985).

Sue Hawker (v); Rob Koral (g); Tim Whitehead (ss), Chris Barchelor (t); Paul Davis (perc), Mick Tauben (b); Paul Lawley (tb); Gary Gillson (d) — 1, 4, 5, 6, 8, 9; Steve Smith (c); Doug Sinclair (b); Ross Elliot (d) — 2, 3, 7, Ian Ellis (sa) — 1.

SKETCH MAIL from the Working Week/Sade side of things: pop soul with jazz pretensions. The presence of Tim Whitehead and Chris Barchelor from Loose Tubes should not lead you to expect straight-ahead solos — they are restricted in the main to horn section chores. Ian Ellis scribbles some soprano over "Wanting You", Tim Whitehead blows some nice tenor behind the vocals on "Heroes", but really it's just flavouring. A glance at the label's composer-credits show that Sketch is supervised by Sue Hawkins and Rob Koral (voice and guitar) and they call the shots. You can't get away from the *avoca*, a mixture of music-for-a-candlelit-dinner clichés and attempts to inject a bit of realism (a few nods to sexual politics).

Response to voices is a subjective business, but I don't really believe Sue Hawker. She adopts a bluesy swagger, coming on like a junior Etta James, but she hasn't the musical imagination to bring it off — she's forever returning to the same blaring note, the monotony of a foghorn. Helen Terry (or Boy George for that matter) could sing rings round her. It's authentic in a certain kind of feminist-soul way, music for people who think Nina Simone is God. If you liked the Au Pairs, Sue Hawker's voice might get to you.

The songwriting doesn't help, with its

emphasis on repeated phrases, a kind of bludgeoning sloganeering without political point — how often can you listen to someone sing "Where are the heroes?" The production is pretty much *as naturel* (no hip-hop tricks), with a leaning towards the smooth powerchords of Rob Koral's expensive sounding cosmo-rock guitar. On the more ponderous numbers (like "Heroes") the sound is bombastic and oppressive — trendy and old-fashioned all at once.

As part of the "alternative" rhythm section Doug Sinclair lays down some sharp bass lines on "Out The Front Door" he achieves the manic, cork-up-the-arse cool of Chic or something of late 70s Salsoul, but it's a battle against the thick textures on top. There's an attempt at reggae (inexplicably called "Roo") which would sound like the Selector if it did not recall the Police. Now, Two Tone — there's a thought — when pop could seize on exotic (ie non-rock) rhythms untouched by the dead hand of self-conscious "sophistication", Sketch are determined to be "adult" and in pop that's neither realistic nor much fun.

BEN WATSON

JIMMY HEATH

PIER PLEASURE

(Landmark LLP 1514)

Recorded: New Jersey, 17 & 18 February 1987

Train Coming In, Song For Ben Webster, You Can See, Ellington's String Horn, Forever Swamy, I Wanted For You.

Heath (ss, as, ts), Tom Williams (t, flhn), Larry Willis (p), Tony Patton (g), Stafford James (b), Akira Tana (d).

A WHILE AGO I might have trashed this for being sentimental, anachronistic pop revivalism. But a while ago I hadn't heard The Leader's *Maidfor* — a record equally time-locked — or *J Mood* — whose surface sheen is as near as damn it to that in evidence here. And seeing as the music contained on those two records is apparently destined to haul us into the next century, then maybe I'd better rend just my stance. I wouldn't want to find myself left behind with just the complete Caravan Of Dreams catalogue for company, after all.

Having said that, *Pier Pleasure*, unlike those two missives from the vanguard, is a very unassuming, undemonstrative and therefore inoffensive record; Jimmy Heath isn't conning us into raking this music at anything other than face value. So alongside the inevitable dusting off of ancient charts, there's a few freshly hewn tributes to standard song form,

some over-the-shoulder nods to good friends gone and a hierarchical group structure that doesn't try to cover up for its reluctance to bend under the weight of 25 years of collectivism.

I think there's a lesson to be learned in this music somewhere; probably related to the way the participants freshen up formats that should have been outmoded 30 years ago purely for kicks. As entertainment. For others. And without feeling the need to run the results up some fake mast of tradition—all of 70 years high that—in order to distract attention, with a little historical association, from their regurgitative approach.

Armstrong never regressed to seek succour from polyphony, nor Ellington from ragtime; their imaginations were a little in need of such reactionary bolstering. Jimmy Heath, although rocking the boat slightly by fashioning a solo on the opening track here that sounds like the kind of thing today's young tenors might be coming up with five years hence, might barely register on the same scale as those two. But at least he's not trying to disguise the fact by staking claims that are as impertinent as they are false. And for that reason alone, *For Phantoms* has qualities in abundance that *Modjazz* and *J. Mood* and all those other back-to-the-roots-in-the-tradition cover ups can only make facile allusions to: Honesty, Truth, Integrity.

TONY HERRINGTON

JAZZ WARRIORS OUT OF MANY, ONE PEOPLE (Antilles AN 8720)

Recorded: London Show Theatre, 14–15 March 1987

Warriors; In Reference To Our Forefathers' Fathers' Dance; Minor Groove, Saint Maurice (Of Aargus), Many Passes.

Kevin Robinson, Claude Deppa, Harry Beckert (tr, flht); Robin Walker, Trevor Edwards (trb), Andy Harwood, Courtney Pine, Ray Carless, Jeff Gordon, Brian Edwards (reeds); Phil Bent (pf, perc), Adrian Read (p); Orphy Robinson (vib, marim), Alan Weekes (g), Andy Grappay (tba), Val Manick (b), Mark Mondair (d); Mamadi Kamara (perc), Cleveland Warkiss (v).

ANYONE EXPECTING some kind of Anglicised Mel Lewis band is set to be disappointed; for the rest of us, this is a satisfying, simmering record of big band music that is quite out of the genre-ordinary. The whole issue of Jazz

Warriors (they seem to have dropped the preceding definite article) has some inevitable extra-musical overtones: the fact of a young, all-black London big band, itself growing out of a body like Abi Jazz Arts, would be of some dramatic interest no matter what music was going down. But let that be no apology for any musical shortcomings—very few allowances of any sort need to be made for *Out Of Many, One People*.

Perhaps the recording is a bit passive and lacking in some big band punch, the compositions aren't realised enough to be much more than starting points for soloists; and a certain rambling quality invades even the best pieces, "Minor Groove" and "My Passes". Otherwise it's a set full of enterprising, often surprising moments.

The consistency of soloists is a wonder. Pine, possibly because he practises harder than anyone else, sounds the fullest-formed of anybody here, with a typically athletic soprano entry on "In Reference". But Kevin Robinson, Claude Deppa, Phil Bent and Ray Carless are hardly more than a beat behind. Cleveland Warkiss has some startling moments, while the exotic rush of percussion below is usually but fully in tune with the direction of, say, "St Maurice".

It's the ragged flavour, the search for a personal collective identity that makes *Jazz Warriors* compelling. The operation is probably too fluid and hamstrung by personal preferences to get over anything like the precision-tooled class of famous big bands. But that may be the price on individual democracy and genuine multiple expression. If so, it's one worth paying.

MIKE LIND

LYSIS

SUPERIMPOSITIONS

(Soma 783)

Recorded: Not stated

Heterosony 1, Psycho Pulse, Heterosony 2, Heterosony 3, Transcend And...; Transcend And...; Heterosony 4.

Harry Beckert (tr, flht), Jim Fulkerson (trb, elec), Geoff Warren (f, as), Colin Lawson (cl, bcl), Roger Dean (pf, b), Hazel Smith (vn), Alan Davis (cb), Marc Meggido (b), Ashley Brown (perc).

ASIDE FROM exhibiting the worst dress sense (fisherman's smocks yet) and "bainsyle"

(overgrown boson crop) in Christendom (and if you think that's not important, you're too damn old), Roger Dean, like so many minor modern day composers, has a tiresome habit of buffing up the tedious insignificance of his work with a degree of pretense which would shame a Contemporary Music Network press release. So, in his sleeve note to *Superimpositions* he packs in the obligatory references (in the hope of association) to irrelevant Europeans (Fernyough, Webern), makes arrogant attempts to reinvent the English language (as if it doesn't already contain enough adjectives to convey the inconsequence of his "art") and, believe it or not, goes on to make a big deal out of the fact that the music contained within is a combination of both composition and improvisation.

As a pained, limpid imagination and meandering indulgence would better serve as a description of what it is that happens here; which is probably nothing the SME, AMM and other bourgeois aggregations didn't tire of 15 years ago, and maybe even Gunther Schuller and Harold Shapero 15 years before that.

Dean, predictably, imposes milestones on the music himself, aesthetically or otherwise they are all wide of the mark. There is little evidence of, "a sparseness (sic) rare in improvised music" in either the florial pomposity of "Piano Pulse" or the public school energy music of "Heterosony 1". And I suggest it might be rather difficult not to achieve, "a greater diversity of texture than is normal" with an instrumentation of two brass, two reeds, three string players, a percussionist and a bank of electronics. Surprisingly, Dean doesn't prove me wrong on that score.... For the most part, anyway.

TONY HERRINGTON

CHARLIE HADEN QUARTET WEST (Verve 831 673 1)

Recorded: 22 and 23 December 1986, LA.
Heritage (for Pat Metheny), Body and Soul (for Rach Ganss), The Good Life (for Quincy Coleman), In The Moment (for Joshua Redman), Poor and Tanya Haden, Big City (for Raymond Chandler), My Foolish Heart (for Bill Evans), Santa La Fama, Fool Mountain, Paraphrase (for Charles Parker), Tanya County (for the late Carl Hays) and Virginia Day Haden.

Ernie Watts (as, ts, cl), Alan Broadbent (pf), Charlie Haden (tr, solo-b on "Tanya County"), Billy Higgins (d).

WHAT EVERYONE CHOOSES to ignore about

Raymond Chandler and the world he portrayed is how basically comfy and soft-boiled so much of it was, how prone to sentiment and thoughts of home. After a tub-thumping and occasionally testy visit from the Liberation Music Orchestra, it's a trifle strange to turn to these eight homages by Charlie Haden's LA quartet. It's also rather nice to be able to hear the bass.

A long intro to "Body and Soul" demonstrates conclusively that, however much he's attracted to Catalan war songs and liberation anthems, his basic instincts are still swing-oriented and balladish. He sounds more at ease here than he has ever been in a post-bop context. It's only on "Passport" and Ornette's "The Good Life" that the mix curdles slightly, kept together only by Higgin's inspired drumming. Watts and Broadbent don't combine as well on these tracks, performing more fluently when the tone is less controversial.

"Tasty Country" is a long inescape on solo bass, recalling the old songs from the Haden family's radio show. It's a loving, tender performance, beautifully voiced and full of unexpected harmonic insights. Haden's bass sings a steady tenor.

"Bay City", another original, best encapsulates the nostalgia. The foghorn creak, the bay slaps against the dock, Marlowe turns his collar up against the cold. It's a particular gift to be both tough and tender-minded. Ernie Watts has it, Higgins has it in abundance. It's more of a surprise to find that Charlie Haden has it.

BRIAN MORTON

JIMMIE LUNCEFORD RHYTHM BUSINESS

(Hep 1013)

Recorded: New York, 17 November & 19 December 1934, 29 May 1935

Bukey You're Yea, Chillin' Get Up, Solitudo, Rosa, Since My Best Gal Tamed Me Down, Juulito, Rhythm Is Our Business, I'm Working Through Heaven With You, Shaky Your Head From Side To Side, Sleepy Toot Gals, Bird Of Paradise, Rhapsody Junior, Remedy Wild, Four Or Five Tons, If I Had Rhythm In My Nanny Rhythm, Eddie Tompkins, Tommy Stevenson, Paul Webster, Sy Oliver (t), Henry Wells, Elmer Crumley, Russell Bowles (tb), Eddie Durham (tb, g), LaForest Dene, Dan Grassom (as), Willie Smith (as, cl), Earl Carruthers (as, bs, cl), Joe Thomas (as, cl), Eddie Wilcox (pt, Al Norris (g), Moses Allen (b), Jimmy Crawford (d, vib) (collective personnel).

THE CASE for this swing band's defence has been well presented by Max Harrison — who



writes of the "effort of historical imagination" needed to grasp the originality of Sy Oliver's arranging practice. Oliver, the band's most important and inspired arranger, is responsible for half the numbers here, yet even on these the residue of society dance-band mannerisms becomes frustrating. The "effort of imagination" is of a quite different order in the case of Ellington's contemporaneous recordings or (a less unfair comparison) those Spike

Hughes made in New York the previous year, where the sweetness is never in danger of becoming syrupy.

There are pretty and clever effects, e.g. the chimes behind the trombone interlude on "Chillen Get Up". But too often that's all they are — for instance the double-time passage dropped in inappropriately towards the end of "Since My Best Girl Turned Me Down", which sounds as if it could have been the occasion for a joyous ride-out. But the main problem I have with this collection of 1934-5 recordings is the sheer blind unmemorability of much of the material. The lack of interesting solo-work is also a disappointment. There were good solos in the band, most notably the saxophonists Joe Thomas and Willie Smith (who contributes a beautifully light and airy solo on "Rain", the best track). Yet the most prominent individual voice seems to be the thoroughly tasteless high-note trumpeter Tommy Stevenson (with the onset of his solo, "Walking Through Heaven" becomes purgatorial). There are also far too many excruciating vocal trios (one would be too many). There are worse Lunceford collections on LP — but equally the present volume has no classics of the order of "Stratosphere" or "Organ Grinder's Swing".

ANDY HAMILTON

SONNY SHARROCK BAND SEIZE THE RAINBOW (Enemy Emy 104)

Recorded: Electric Lady Studio, NYC, May 1987
Dick, Dog, My Song, Footnote, J. D. Sabor, Seize The Rainbow, The Post Advantages of Zydeco Huesap, Shaverhead's High-Top Sneakers
Sonny Sharrock (g); Melvin Gibbs (b); Abe Speller, Pheterson Akiafi (d); Bill Laswell (6 str) on "Shaverhead's High-Top Sneakers"

SONNY SHARROCK plays guitar the way Ken Norton used to box: hard and sullen, this is no game and more than just a living. Personal Sharrock's great achievement — one he shares with Hendrix and where he differs from the Mahavishnu and Coryells he occasionally resembles — is to lend potentially the most abstract of instruments some of the qualities of a personal voice. Brötzmann and Laswell, Fellow-Lost Exits, left him behind on their recent crawl through the low life, good-bad guys are always canny accountants of risk and beside Sharrock this pair are strictly noise.

Sharrock's own big risk is banality. The multi-tracked ducking and weaving of *Guitar* camouflaged some fairly obvious pab. By contrast the trio set *Dance With Me Montana* was an all-out race against the points and the bell, a technical knock-out on grounds of sheer exhaustion.

On *Seize The Rainbow*, he's taken pains to let the artistry show through. With a guitar jacked up like a pylon, subtlety isn't what you look for. "My Song", though, has a softer, more lyrical feel and the two drummers are superbly distributed to give a complex and shifting background to what is, as always, a basically simple melody line, oft repeated. "Dick Dogs" resounds from *Montez*, still barking mad and in sore need of a choke chain.

"Zydeco Honeycup" shows enough tongue in cheek to convince me it isn't just displaced gumshoe. Like "My Song", it provides a strategically placed change of pace and mood. Coming after the ferocious title track, it's a version of All's box one, fix one tactic.

The ubiquitous Laxwell gets to do his frustrated guitarist act on "Sherashead's High-Top Sneakers" but then he holds the ultimate sanction of the production desk. By then the white flags are up all over the place; reserves are hardly called for. As a touring hand, Speller, Gibbs and Aklaiff may well be OK but, as he proved on *Guitar*, Sharrock doesn't need a gang. Me, I'm waiting for a Sharrock/Shannon Jackson duo set. "Low Life! Shree-it! Listen to that!" For the moment, though, *Seize The Rainbow* wins at all weights

BRIAN MORTON

BETTY ROCHÉ TAKE THE 'A' TRAIN (AFF 175)

Recorded, New York City, March 1956
Take The 'A' Train, Something To Live For, In A Mellon Toss, Time After Time, Go Away Blues, Can't Help Love That Man, Route 66, All My Life, I Just Got The Message, Baby, All You Sins, You Don't Love Me No More, September In The Rain.
Betty Roché (v), Conde Candoli (t), Donn Trenner (p), Eddie Costa (vb), Whitney Mitchell (b), Davey Williams (d).

BRONX-BORN Mary Elizabeth "Betty" Roché is best known as front woman for the Ellington orchestra during two different periods. August 42–April 44 and December 51–February 53. These recordings were made three years after the latter stint, during one of the chanteuse's frequent trips back home to her mother's house. Ellington spoke of Roché as displaying "a soul inflection in a bop state of intrigue, presented . . . as a little girl with an adult delivery." Well – yes and no.

Caught up in the flutters of those mellow scat tangents captured here, she is still on autopilot – her individuality is palpably the generic frontperson's knack for a hard sell. And her attack – the abruptly closed clauses, hammered endings and cursorily sentimental readings – reeks of routine hours, road work and the long residency.

As for her "soul inflection", Roché is robust enough (if galling) in the manner of someone used to pulling focus in front of a very large band). But her bond with the music sounds eerily devoid of depth in any category: spiritual, sexual or aesthetic. The basic

attributes of soul – passion, and an ability to generate visceral speech from the formlessness of pure sound – are sharply absent.

It's an absence made all the spookier by a total, unthinking capitulation to the blandest conventions of the "feminine" held by a blond era: the 50s. Roché might as well be singing the phone book for all the fire and sparkle of womanly essence her technique exudes. It's music for commercials: all push and brusque, businesslike utility.

CYNTHIA RINE

LEE MORGAN SEARCH FOR THE NEW LAND (Blue Note BST 84169)

Recorded, New York, 15 February 1964
Search For The New Land, The Joker, No Koyotat, Melancholia, Morgan The Private.
Lee Morgan (tr); Wayne Shorter (ts), Grant Green (g), Herbie Hancock (p), Reginald Workman (b), Billy Higgins (d).

THERE ARE TIMES here when you might think this was the Messengers front-line auditioning a new rhythm section; less strong is the hint of Miles's quintet looking for a new trumpeter, but it's occasionally there. Which is to say that the music here deals in and reflects transitions. At the physical level Morgan was shortly to rejoin Blakey's band whilst Shorter was on his way from the Messengers to Miles; at the level of ideas it was a time when several strong influences had established themselves and there was much trailing-off going on. Perhaps the most specific Blue Note ingredient here is the inclusion of Grant Green. Here his clean lines and beautiful sense of the legato fit well – they didn't always in some of the sessions that Al Laon shoeboxed him into – and his work provides the refreshment that neither Miles nor the Messengers could reach.

Morgan himself seems particularly prone to the sense of cross-reference prevailing here. Returning to the scene after a period of r-and-r, he seems to have taken on a little of Freddie Hubbard's warmer tone and expansive attitude, but there are still occasions here when he begins to spit and hiss like the hard-bop alley cat most perfectly represented by his best work. Morgan also wrote all the lines for the date, though for much of the second side anybody could be forgiven for thinking they were Shorter's, whilst there are also strong hints of Coltrane's "Spiritual" on the title track. This is no bad thing, the "Sidewinder"/"Rumpoller" syndrome is absent, and

everybody seems keen to make this a class album, it may be of course that all this helped take that little bit of the imperious edge off Morgan's playing.

Overall the music here deals in what was even then fairly well-known, and what is now so much better-known that it has become a standard trade-language; what has kept it fresh is the breadth of reference it uses and the considerable individual skills of the performers.

JACK LOOKE

MODERN JAZZ QUARTET/NEW YORK CHAMBER SYMPHONY THREE WINDOWS (WEA 254 833)

Recorded, New York, 16–20 March 1987
Three Windows, Kansas City Blues, Encounter In Cayuga, Django, A Day In Delatol, John Lewis (p), Milt Jai Koon (vb); Percy Heath (b), Connie Kay (d); New York Chamber Symphony (no details)

ONE OF THE spin-offs (if that's the term) of the increasing CD market seems to be that LPs are getting longer. This one clocks in at about 52 minutes and it's not the first this year to come in at around that mark. This is not an unintended blessing, it means altering one's listening habits, and years of having one's ears close down after about 35–40 minutes means that concentration sometimes goes. Certainly much of the closing 16-minute "Dubrovnik" went right past me the first time around. But this is a record, in any case, to be taken by the sleeve unless you're a complete MJQ junkie.

It is, as might be expected, a finely-wrought and delicately detailed set, full of subtlety and a kind of austere generosity. Some of the material – "Django" (1954) and "Three Windows" (1957) – comes from the quartet's classic repertoire, the rest of it is more recent. There is no point here where it might be said that the orchestra is simply a backdrop to the quartet in an MJQ-and-strings fashion: Lewis has taken his themes and reworked them comprehensively – re-composed the material – so that, though recognisably the same, the pace of development is different and the textures generally denser. The writing extends across the improvisational space, too, so that there is less sense of theme-and-solo, more the shape of extended work enclosing an improvisational core.

Whether you'll like it depends largely on whether you already like or are prepared to like

the MJQ. For though the album offers a skilful and really quite complex extension of the quartet it doesn't alter the fundamental laws which have governed this group for over 30 years. Jackson still strings thousands of notes together without any apparent effort (and probably still manages to wipe his nose while he does it), Lewis's piano still sounds square as a brick till you catch on to the nature of his sense of time, Connie Kay still isn't Art Blakey and still makes it clear that he never wanted to be. Years ago I used not to like the group, because they weren't being what I thought they ought to be, then I came to like them for what they actually were. Now sometimes I marvel at their ability to renew their work, but then again I suspect Lewis had the possibility of a very long-life band in mind from the start, and structured his thoughts and career accordingly. It is certainly not impossible to conceive of a golden jubilee concert tour around about 2003.

JAN K. COOKE



down-home feel to it, but there isn't much more than that, despite a slick horn section featuring Randy Brecker and Howard Johnson. Still, David Sanborn rates him as an influence, and that might sell a few records.

KENNY MATTHESON

jacks bottom-line gristle'n'guts.

This deficiency is most audible on Mercer's justly-famous period piece "One For My Baby." Beloved of male vocalists from Ol' Blue Eyes through Iggy Pop, this closing-time lament has long been an index for separating the men and the boys, the Marines and the mere crew-cuts. And pleasant though his style may be, Troup comes off far too light in the loafers to croon such steak-and-potatoes schmalz.

CYNTHIA ROSE

HANK CRAWFORD

MR CHIPS

(Milestone M-9149)

Recorded NY, November 1986

Endless Love, You Send Me, Mr Chips, Stand By Me, Let's Fall In Love All Over Again, Badtime. Randy Brecker, Alan Rubin (tr), Hank Crawford (ast): David Newman (ts, fl), Howard Johnson (bar), Connell Dupree (gt), Richard Tee (ky), Wilbur Bascomb (tb), Bernard Purdie (dr), Leon Thomas (vn on *You Send Me*).

HANK CRAWFORD is one of those big, bluesy saxophonists who come to jazz from blues and soul, and the other musicians on this set of pop tunes mostly work out of the same vein. The result is a series of work-outs that stick with the melody and don't take off on any unexpected tangents.

Lionel Richie's *Endless Love* opens the set in a bouncy, sweetly played version, with Crawford producing a full, almost tenor-ish sound from his alto. Sam Cooke's *You Send Me* gets an even straighter treatment, with a cool vocal from Leon Thomas, but the lethargic *Stand By Me* doesn't really work at all. The altoist's full tone is again evident on the ballad, while his two originals, *Mr Chips* and *Badtime*, are conventional blues.

It's all tightly played, but more ammunition for those who argue that the contemporary pop tune is not really a suitable vehicle for improvisation. Miles notwithstanding. Crawford's alto has a gritty,

BOBBY TROUP

BOBBY TROUP PLAYS JOHNNY MERCER

(AFF 174)

Recorded Los Angeles, January 28, 1955

Johnny Mercer, Midnight Sun, Come Fly Or Come Shine, Laura, The Old Black Magic, One For My Baby, Cuckoo In The Clock, Day In Day Out, Jeepers Creepers, Love's Got Me In A Laze, Mood, Skylark, I'm With You.

Bobby Troup (p, vt); Howard Roberts (tr), Red Mitchell (b), Don Heath (dr), Bob Enevoldsen (vtr).

FROM NAT "King" Cole's *Rain* 66 in 46 to the albums of his wife Julie London, songsmith Bobby Troup has produced a neat, sophisticated body of work. But he also sings, writes for television (*Stars of Jazz*) and acts in films and small-screen plays. On this collection—a tribute to another multi-faceted 50s song-and-show-man, Johnny Mercer—Troup handles piano and voice.

Best-known of the selection is Mercer's standard, "That Old Black Magic" (co-written with Harold Arlen, as is "Come Rain or Come Shine" from "St Louis Woman", also essayed here.) Best of Troup's performances, though, are two instrumentals: "Laura" and the familiar "Jeepers Creepers." On these his taste for elegant, clean restraint works nicely—but the same cannot be said of his mannered, slightly nasal voice. For roles in *Dragonet* and *The High Cost of Living*, Troup ably impersonated the renaissance 50s hipster. *De facto*, however, he

KRONOS

WHITE MAN SLEEPS

(Nonesuch 9 79163-1)

Recorded Wellesley, Massachusetts, January 1987
Kevin Volans: *White Man Sleeps No. 1*, Charles Ives
Holding Your Own, John Hassell: *Pave The Coast*
(*Club From The Coast*), Omotia Coleman: *Loody Woman*, Ben Johnston: *Amazing Grace*, Kevin Volans: *White Man Sleeps No. 5*, Beila Bartok: *String Quartet No. 1*
David Harrington, John Sherba (vln), Hank Dutt (vln), Jean Jeunenau (vln).

IN BRIAN MURTON's interview with two members of Kronos for *Wired* 41 Harrington commented: "In an age of increasing impersonalisation, the quartet still sounds personal, like voices." This may well be behind the feeling I have always had that the string quartet is somehow the purest form of music. Solo singers and instrumentalists may be more personal, duos and trios produce the interaction that is missing from solo efforts, but a quartet seems to be the optimum: enough parts to produce all the elements one expects in music but not too many lines to follow.

Kronos does make the traditional noise,

whatever "the image" may lead people to think, and they make it extremely well. Likewise, though much is made of the eclecticism of their repertoire, the items included here which were not written for string quartet are transformed so that they do not sound like mere novelties.

Bartók's severe and uncompromising writing continues to set the standard for the genre and loses nothing of its freshness and vibrancy when heard alongside more modern works. The oldest piece here, Ives's "little practice piece" setting chromatic and diatonic scales against each other, has, unusually for an Ives work, lost its shock value; the pan-, poly- and a-tonality he pioneered is almost commonplace today. But I think I hear more of the influence of his own magnificent quartets than I do of Bartók in the modern pieces. The works by Volans and Hassell were written for Kronos and are attractive, approachable pieces. Volans reminds me of Reich and John Adams on this showing (but then, as Brahms said, any fool can see that) and my reactionary soul hopes that the trend to fuse minimalism (I prefer to call it "process music") and neo-tonalism will gather momentum, edging out the elitism of the post-serialists.

BARRY WITHERDEN

GRANT GREEN IDLE MOMENTS (Blue Note BST 84154)

Recorded: New York, 4 November 1963.
Life Moments, Jean De Fleur, Django, Nomad, Joe Henderson (ts), Bobby Hutchinson (wb), Duke Pearson (p), Grant Green (g), Bob Cranshaw (b), Al Harewood (d)

SOMETIMES ONE feels a trifle sorry for Grant Green – his records seem to be judged on the quality of his companions, rather than by his own contributions. *Grantland*, for instance, is a classic because of the presence of Yusuf Lateef. This one, even more sought-after and hence a welcome reissue, appears to revolve around Henderson and Hutchinson. It's true, eh? Henderson has some beefy moments here, although these were early days for his style: on "Nomad" he's all over the place, and Hutchinson's succeeding improvisation is all the more lucid in comparison.

Duke Pearson's fascinating sleeve-note explains the recording of the title tune, and why it lasted twice as long as intended. The languorous tempo somewhat unexpectedly suits the tenorman very well, and his solo

reminds one of the luxuriant ballad features that Paul Gonsalves used to take with Ellington. "Django", after an opening even slower than the MJQ's, turns into a good medium-tempo blues; "Jean De Fleur" is the fast one.

What about Grant Green, then? He is on mixed form, perhaps. Sometimes he can be as decisive and crystal-clear in his thinking as, say, Duke Jordan: hear the meticulous but fluent solo in "Django", and pass over the tired blues licks he runs through on the fade. On "Nomad" he tries to be a bit too "modern", and his bebop roots come unstuck.

Elsewhere he has plenty of not-so-alle moments – wider intervals than one expects from a guitarist, always a neat, clear tone

RICHARD CROOK

DAVID MURRAY AND JACK DEJOHNETTE IN OUR STYLE (RSD-8012)

Recorded: New York, 1–4 September 1966
In Your Style, Tin Can Alley, Bob's First On The Ground, The Day, Pastel Rhapsody, Great Peace
David Murray (ts, bcl); Jack DeJohnette (d, p); Fred Hopkins (b on "Style" and "Dance")

MURRAY HAS always worked splendidly in two situations, so the two tracks with Fred Hopkins are especially exciting (and both are Butch Morris tunes, incidentally). But this is a good, up-to-the-mark Murray session all through. In the all-consuming drive of "Great Peace" or "Tin Can Alley" he swallows all the velocity that the drummer can throw at him, inventing and destroying structures on a whim. Murray has subsumed his Ayler manner to a point where perhaps only the occasional crabby side or ingested scream remains in a line that otherwise jostles with his own, slightly peculiar melodic sense. He seems to hear a tune in a remote, far-off way, as if he has to plough past a great storm of alternatives to get to it. This does make him gable some of his lines, but the sense of voyaging is pretty exciting.

DeJohnette is an able if rather conservative foil here. He plays sweet-natured and unexceptional piano on "Pastel Rhapsody" and is otherwise hunched over the kit, hammering at the perfect equation of bass pedal to snare to ride cymbal, only occasionally distracted into a roll. The music finally reaches a state of grace in the pent-up (and misleadingly titled) "Great Peace", which is like a series of great breakers,

a roar of saxophone and drums.

MIKE FISHER

MAX ROACH DOUBLE QUARTET BRIGHT MOMENTS

(Soul Note SN 1159)
Recorded: New York, 1 & 2 October 1966.
Bright Moments, Elxar Suite, Hi Fly, Tribute To Duke And Mongo, Double Delight
Cecil Bridgewater (tr), Odean Pope (ss), Tyrone Brown (b), Max Roach (d), Diane Monroe, Lesa Terry (vn), Maxine Roach (via), Zela Terry (cl).

I SUPPOSE ONE of the things Ornette did for jazz – almost in passing – was to redefine a role for (a) the violin and subsequently (b) grouped strings, just at the point when (a) was about to be relegated to the history books and (b) to the drecky consequences that followed *Bird With Strings*. Not that the performance of the Uptown String Quartet consistently reflects Ornette directly, either in playing or voicing, being generally fairly conventional, if vigorous, but there is a moment in "Elxar Suite" where the connection is clearly available to the ear. There's also an exquisite few bars on "Hi Fly" that wouldn't have disgraced Joe Venuti, which tends to indicate breadth of thought and study on the part of the quartet's members.

"Elxar Suite" is for me the most completely realised piece here, using Tyrone Brown's electric bass as a keystone so that the group(s) begin to function as an integrated two-horn, five-strings and drummer ensemble, and the whole relates to the disjunctive practices developed in Roach's great groups of 1958–61. The rolling, declamatory lines that those bands worked from are reflected again in "Double Delight", another successful track, while "Hi Fly", though it doesn't quite develop the same density, revels in the elegance of Randy Weston's great line.

Roach himself plays with great verve, though it seems to me he's a touch more deliberate now, either choosing to be or having to be a teeny bit slower than in the past (examine carefully his work on "Double Delight"). The excellent sound quality both emphasises this and also highlights what a conceptually clean style it still remains. Bridgewater's work is also interesting, bright and lithe, but this album, for all it has a lot of solo space, is more about how such space is created within and surrounded by an overall ensemble. As such it's an intricate, intriguing, well-worth-hearing set. However briefly, Max



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has got a good band again, and that's always good for jazz.

JACK COOK

WAYNE SHORTER

SPEAK NO EVIL

(Blue Note BST 84194)

Recorded: New York, 24 December 1964

Wink Hart; For-El-Fo-Foo; Diana Goddard; Speak

No Evil; Infant Eyes; Wild Flower

Shorter (ts), Freddie Hubbard (tr), Herbie Hancock

(p), Ron Carter (b); Elvin Jones (d).

AS THE REISSUES of Wayne Shorter's 60s recordings continue to reach these shores with waller-sapping regularity, the reasons for his apparent low-profile during that period begin to come into some kind of focus. What the dates he recorded for Blue Note under his own name and the approximately contemporaneous ones he took part in with The Jazz Messengers and Miles Davis show is that Wayne at all times gave the impression of existing on the fringes of everything – hard bop, modality, freedom – whilst fitting into nothing; in a

genre as obsessively compartmentalising as jazz that is no way to go about getting your name hauled up in lights.

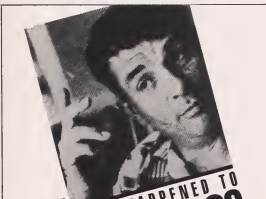
Conveniently enough, *Speak No Evil* might be the record which best telescopes this musical schizophrenia into a single session (*Night Drawer* and *Jayw* were essentially surrogates for The Messengers and Coltrane's quartet respectively, while the subsequent *Enteria* would see his vision break through into something approaching a fully realised art, or at least one not so clouded by equivocation as before).

The last vestiges of Wayne's hard bop heritage are still intact here, not only in the relative directness of the themes (were he absent this might be any one of a number of Blue Note's post-*Solo* mid-60s gatherings), but also in what remains of Coltrane's influence. And it might be the attempts to reconcile the contradictions characteristic of that massive presence with the solidly assured methods of the new thing that installs his solos with such disturbing undercurrents. Outwardly these

might be amongst the simplest statements of their time (for long sections you can count the notes hit on your fingers), but inwardly they represent a player in crisis.

His solo on the title track is the most extreme example here, beginning as a straight melodic line it rapidly dissolves into ambiguity with broken, disassociated phrases and dissonant riffs before eventually ending up down the inevitable blind alley with Wayne having to start the whole thing again from scratch. In varying degrees the rest of the record swims through similarly troubled waters. The only relief, aside from the contributions of his relatively conservative sidemen, which only serve to throw the complexities of the leader's playing into even starker relief, comes with "Infant Eyes", a still, unearthly ballad that apart from some of Elmo Hope's compositions might be as near to unique as anything in jazz. That could also serve as an apt description of Wayne Shorter himself.

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FLASH OF THE SPIRIT

By Robert Farrel Thompson
(Vintage, \$12.95)

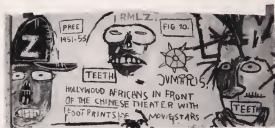
AT THE CENTRE of all its hype, our "postmodern universe" is little more than a marketplace. Within it, true freedom of choice is non-existent and community is just a cosmetic sham. Its art serves the commodity brokers – and they in turn confer upon it the acceptable degrees of value.

The majority of those signs and forms which continue to provide this official culture with its superficial energies derive from a black aesthetic. But they have been so cannibalised, so isolated from their real context (black life) as to become almost abstracted. From the concept of hot playing taken up by Manhattan society jazz bands of the 20s through hi-top tennis shoe merchandising today (or club evenings shod around "rare groove"), official culture approaches black expressive practice as a white man's five-and-dime. Instead of producing a keener apprehension of its historic provenance, the richness of black art arouses envy and infatuation.

This isn't entirely due to the worst of impulses; the way in which black life functions also sets it apart from mainstream (white) power structures. Its arts, styles, religions, methods of hauling accomplishment and of evolving cultural confidence often differ in basic ways from those that are likely to win official recognition.

This is one of several factors which make *Flash Of The Spirit* a mind-bending work. It's been described as everything from "art history to dance by" to "a milestone of comparative analysis on the continuum which runs between black culture in Africa and the New World – spiritually, aesthetically, and philosophically". The work of white academic (Robert Farrel Thompson is a Texan teaching African and Afro-American art history at Yale), the book's aim is as singular as its content. Thompson is less concerned with enumerating black contributions to Western civilisation than with convincing us to re-order the basic questions we pose about that civilisation.

To do this, he musters a dazzling array of primary-source researches – all aiming to discover more about "the flash of the spirit of a



'Chinese', 1983. Jean Michel Basquiat: *The rhythms of Afro-American art are rooted in Mother Africa*

certain people specially armed with improvisatory drive and brilliance". His investigation seeks those organising principles which have brought to the Western hemisphere concepts ranging from the call-and-response of gospel through the iconographies of Southern funeral tradition. Herbalism, voodoo, examples of multiple meter in the "music" of Mandé weaving (and the Afro-American quilts which followed), ideographic writing, and pervasive systems of signs which enshrine the criteria for perfect living – such black roots of our culture resonate with moral force and emblematic power. Thompson's book tackles five specific areas of such cross-pollination: Yoruba art and culture in the Americas, Haitian *voodoo*, Kongo art and religion in the West, Mandé-related art and architecture in the Americas, and Egham art and writing in two works.

How do automobile hubcaps and discarded lawn furniture broken Yoruba *abé*, or cool? From what Ki-Kongo roots does the word jazz – and so much of the jazz and blues lexicon – come? Why are the Afro-American graves of North America garnished with gleaming seashells or guarded with white chicken feathers encased in sparkling glass *jars*? Did baton-twirling spring from voodoo? Thompson's revelations tell us such queries are anything but frivolous.

The book's later chapters are spottier than its first: examples are less numerous and the gaps in research are noticeably wider. Yet these are bridged by more than an enthusiast's determination. However exacting Thompson's enquiries, one basic truth underpins them all.

The system from which African culture derives, as he proves, are every iota the aesthetic and philosophical equals of the Graeco-Roman, Judeo-Christian white West. And the lines of their contribution to music, in particular, are straight and vivid and strong.

With myth and folk wisdom as his weapons, Thompson chips away at the bedrock of patriarchal white mystique – introducing behind the monolith of its ignorance a vista of breathtaking vision and grace. In America, this book has been hailed as the first foundation-stone in a new, post-liberated black arts movement, an Afrocentric model for that *now* as yet unsung by black artists, writers and aestheticians. But it is equally important as a milestone of polemic.

Thompson's discussion of the way African forms are "creolised" into Southern, Cuban, and Caribbean customs, how they participated in the evolution of Afro-Mexican architecture; and how thoroughly they continued to influence Afro-American religious observance is not just fascinating and picturesque. It also constitutes a formidable argument for re-writing modern art history, a plea to turn that myopic hegemony into an engagement with actual politics, sex and sweat. All this and more is possible, argues Thompson, because all this and more is what it takes to make art – and history.

Flash Of The Spirit may be ordered through London's Compendium Bookshop at 234 Camden High St, London NW1 (01-267-1525).

CYNTHIA ROSE

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But Can They Bebop?

IT ISN'T often I feel the need to put pen to paper, but after reading Richard Cook's review of the Emcee Five *Bebop 61* album in issue 43... when he says that today's young boppers (?) would "probably cut these guys" I must disagree. In fact, I can't think of any young boppers who would be able to cut Gary Cox even today, and shudder to think what would happen if they came up against the likes of Don Weller, Dick Morrissey or the late great Tubby Hayes. No, I'm sorry to say there's no young musician playing bebop today because it's a very difficult music to master. Anybody can make funny noises and loes of notes, but where are all the waiters?

CHARLES GEARY, Allerton Bywater.

Another Fling

DELIGHTED to see your piece on the Gotham label (*Wire* 43) and especially the photo of Tiny Grimes and his Rocking Highlanders. Surely a piece waits to be written on the influence of the bagpipes over black rhythm and blues? It must have been a bizarre sight watching these kilt-clad gentlemen going through their paces at the time, but no more so, perhaps, than seeing our unlamented George Mitchell Minstrels going through their unfortunate routines. I like to think we have come a long way; please continue to foster our hopes for enlightened future reading.

RICHARD HOPKINS, Dorking

New York Nights

IN REPLY TO Jack Cooke's observations in his review of the Mel Lewis *Village Vanguard* LP (*Wire* 41), where he noted that Monday was the night to get out and about in New York City, we were in New York last September and below is a list of some of the artists we could have seen during the week of 7-14 September: Monday, Gil Evans Monday Night Orchestra or Mongo Santamaría with Paquito D'Rivera; Tuesday, Dave Holland Quartet (a quiet night); Wednesday, Sphere or Ray Bryant or the Kirk Lightsey-Rod Mitchell duo; Thursday, John Blake-Dieder Lockwood-Michel Urbaniak or Chico Freeman; Friday, Marion Brown-Billy Bang-Andrew Cyrille or Bobby Watson-Curtis Lundy or Michel Camilo; Saturday, Billy Cobham or John Hicks or Kenny Kirkland or Lester Bowie's Brass Fantasy; Sunday, Jimmy Owens or Barry Harris or Harold Ousley or Marlena Shaw. OK Jack, you choose!

STEWART J. TRAY, Manchester

Monk And Bird

I READ WITH interest your article on Thelonious Monk in *Wire* 41. Your comment that "his meetings with Parker, Gillespie and other immediate contemporaries were not committed to studio discs" is glaringly at fault. My record collection boasts a ten inch Columbia Clef series LP (33C9026) entitled *Bird And Diz* which, along with those two

luminaries, has Monk, Curley Russell on bass and Buddy Rich on drums. The latest reissue of the session is on Verve VE2-2501 and it was recorded in New York on 6 June 1950.

PETER COX, Mitcham

Letter from America

IN HIS autobiography *Point of Departure*, one of your country's pre-eminent journalists, James Cameron, described two of America's outstanding newspapermen as "standing out like beacons in a morass of lumpen-reportage of pedestrian dullness and undisciplined verbosity". It may well border on gross exaggeration to place *Wire* in a similar spotlight in relation to the world's music press, but I thought it about time someone lived up your Letters Page with some decent, heart-felt sycophancy.

Apart from the occasional Gary Giddins article in the *Vibe* I am becoming increasingly disenchanted with the state of jazz music press this side of the water and it is to *Wire* that I turn for refreshment. I have not seen a music magazine anywhere in the world that displays such consistently high standards of journalism, photography, design and innovation. Keep up the good work, stretch out, keep questioning, maintain change and enthusiasm, and keep challenging the myopic attitudes rife in music, the press and the world at large.

HILTON HOLKAMP, Seattle, Washington DC

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FRIDAY 16th OCTOBER 1987 7.30 PM

TICKETS £5 (£4 usual concessions) BOX OFFICE 01 928 3191

THE GREAT CONCERT OF 1987